ANNALS OF OLD ROPLEY

(HAMPSHIRE)

BY

MARIANNA S. HAGEN

1929

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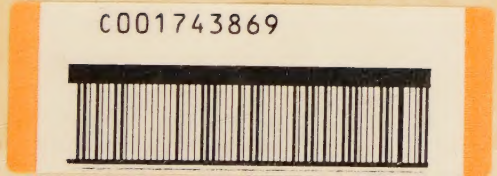

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(HAMPSHIRE).

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MARIANNA S. HAGEN.

1929.

ALTON:
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"THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

GIVING PLACE TO NEW

FOR GOD FULFILS HIMSELF IN MANY WAYS."

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THE ARCHBISHOP'S COTTAGE.

FOREWORD.

By

MRS. STEVENS.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The writer of these stories and village records has lived in Ropley and amongst Ropley people since her earliest childhood.

She has given them love in abundance, and shown this love in devoted services of help, comfort and sympathy in all their joys and sorrows. It is this close touch of knowledge which has given her the possibility and opportunity of collecting these early records as well as of observing some of the later incidents herself. They are, many of them, records of sincere piety with sometimes a mixture of pleasing humour. Every incident will be acceptable to those who love Ropley now, or who will do so in days to come.

It is very beautiful to observe how in such a remote and quiet place and in the dimmer light of long ago, humble lives shone with beauty through the love of God and trust in Him. Truly "they being dead yet speak." The story of "The Village Schoolmaster" is truly inspiring, and should never be forgotten.

May these Records be lastingly preserved, and the devoted love and work of her who loved and laboured for Ropley people be fully rewarded.

Winchester.

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The Writer offers acknowledgments to Mr. Hilaire Belloc, the Author of *The Old Road,* and to Messrs. Constable & Co., the Publishers, for permission to make use of extracts from the book, also to Mr. T. W. Shore, Author, and to Mr. Elliot Stock, Publisher of *The History of Hampshire,* for similar permission.

ANNALS OF OLD ROPLEY.

Ropelia, XII. Century. Roppele and Roppeleghe XIV. Century. Ropeley, XV. Century.

As regards the derivation of the name Ropley, it is described in the Rev. J. B. Johnston's book on "The Place-names of England and Wales" as old English for lea, a meadow, measured by a rope. I like better Mr. Woodhouse's explanation that "Rop" is a corruption or contraction of the name of some Thane who held this Leigh or Ley.

Settlements in the open forest glades where cattle could graze and lie, were called by the Saxons leighs or leys.

THE LAND OF FLOWERS.

The village of Ropley is on a ridge between the main road from Alresford to Alton and the road to Petersfield. It was much celebrated for its bees, and it is said that William the Conqueror always obtained his honey from this place. This betokens a land of flowers, and indeed I always knew it as such in my childhood's days.

THE PILGRIMS' WAY.

It is not only a local tradition, but would appear to be a matter of certainty that the ancient Pilgrim's Way from Winchester to Canterbury passed through Ropley. How greatly one longs to be able to look back and see the merry cavalcade of Chaucer's Lay ride forth—"A motley company from all parts of the realm, ready to wenden on their Pilgrimage with full devout courage to Canterbury."

After crossing the river Arle at Alresford, the Pilgrims turned north-east along the lane at the back of Bishop Sutton village, till they reached the high road leading through Ropley Dean. After passing the point where now "The Chequers Inn" stands, they struck across some fields to the right and emerged into Brislands Lane, which they followed to the point where it joins that part of the high road known as "The Shrake," which descends towards Chawton.

* * * * * * * *

Some say that the Pilgrims' Way traversed the grounds of Ropley House.

THE PILGRIMS' WAY.

EXTRACT FROM "THE OLD ROAD."

By HILAIRE BELLOC.

By daylight we had come down Whitehill Lane, the steep pitch into Bishop's Sutton, and were tramping it up that vale which makes for the watershed and so leads to the corresponding vale of Alton upon the further side.

Here, at least as far as the Anchor Inn, Ropley, and somewhat further, the modern highway corresponds to the Old Road. It thus follows the lowest of the valley, but there is no reason at first that it should do so. The rise is fairly steady, the ground dry (an insignificant stream gradually disappears beneath the chalk) and the direction points straight to the shortest approach for the ridge which cuts off the basin of the Channel from that of the Thames.

This direction does not, however, long continue. The valley curves somewhat to the north, and it might be presumed that the original way, making more directly for the saddle of the watershed would gradually climb the southern hillside. By doing so it would find two advantages; it would take a shorter cut, and it would conquer at one stretch, and rapidly, the main part of the 360 feet between the Anchor Inn and the summit.

It was but a guess that the Old Road would probably take a straight line upwards. The curve of the modern road does not carry it more than half a mile from the direct alignment. The Old Road might well have suffered such a deviation, and we were in some doubt when we proceeded to gather our evidence. That evidence, however, proved conclusive.

There is a tradition, which Mrs. Adie has justly recognised, that the pilgrims of the middle ages passed through Ropley. What is more important to our purpose, Ropley has provided a discovery of British antiquities, Celtic torques, near the track which the more direct line to the watershed would presuppose.

We had further the place-name "Street" to guide us: it is a word almost invariably found in connection with a roadway more or less ancient; later on we found many examples of it upon this same road. Here the hamlet of Gilbert Street lay to the north of our hypothetical alignment, and another named North Street, just to the North of it.

We further noted upon our map that a very considerable portion of the exact alignment drawn from the

main road at the Anchor Inn to the saddle of the watershed would coincide precisely with a lane, which, when we came to examine it, gave every evidence of high antiquity.

Possessed of such evidence, it was our business to see whether investigation upon the spot would confirm the conclusion to which they pointed. There was enough discovered so to confirm it, though the Old Road at this point has disappeared in several places under the plough.

About half a mile from the "Anchor" at the end of the avenue of trees which here dignifies the turnpike and just after the cross-roads, in a meadow which lay to the right of the road, my companion noticed an embankment, perfectly straight, slightly diverging southward from the main road as the line we were seeking should diverge, and (as we found by standing upon it and taking its direction) pointing directly at the saddle of the watershed. Whether it was continued through the garden of the Chequers Inn (a very few yards) I would not trespass to enquire; in the three fields beyond it had entirely disappeared. After this gap, however, there is a boundary, with an old hedge running along it and a path or cartway of a sort. These carry us in exactly the same direction down a short slope, across a lane called Cow Lane, and on to the Manor Farm at North Street. During this stretch of a mile there was nothing more to guide us. The division between fields and properties very often follows the line of some common way; one could not say more.

But the significant fact which, as we believe, permitted us to bridge the gap was this: That the embankment we had first discovered, and the hedge and path (which proceeded in the same line after the loss of the road over the two fields) each pointed directly towards the lane (Brislands Lane) which we entered close to the Manor Farm, which presented, as we found, such marks of antiquity, which takes the hill steeply, and which, on the plateau above continues to aim straight at the saddle of the watershed.

It is difficult to express in a written description the sentiment of conviction which the actual view of such an alignment conveyed. When we had followed the lane up the steep hill and stood by Brislands Farm house, looking back from that height we could see the lane we had been following, the hedge, the corner of the garden of the "Chequers," the embankment beyond, all in one, stretched out like parti-coloured sections of one string, and the two gaps did not emphasise the exactitude of the line.

Turning again in the direction which we were to follow, the evidence of ancient usage grew clearer.

We were upon one of those abandoned grassy roads, which are found here and there in all parts of England; it ran clear away before us for a couple of miles.

It was very broad—twenty yards perhaps. The hedges stood up on either side, guarding land that had been no man's land since public protection first secured the rude communications of the country. No one who has seen portions of the Icknield Way upon the Chilterns, or of this same Old Road where it has decayed upon the Kentish Hills, could doubt the nature of what we saw. Long fallen into disuse, it had yet escaped the marauding landlords during three centuries of encroachment. They had not even narrowed it. So much of its common character remained: it was treeless, wide, and the most of it neglected; never metalled during all the one hundred and fifty years which have transformed English highways. It was the most desolate, as it was the most convincing, fragment of the Old Road we had set out to find.

It had an abominable surface; we had to pick our way from one dry place to another over the enormous ruts which recent carts had made. For generations the lane had been untenanted; but there is a place where, in the last few years, an extraordinary little town of bungalows and wooden cottages has arisen upon either side of the lane.

Not satisfied with the map, we asked of a man who was carrying milk what local name was given to this venerable street. He told us that the part in which we were walking was called Blackberry Lane, but that it had various names at different parts: and as he could tell us nothing more we left him.

At the very summit this way joined a modern, well-made lane, called Farringdon Lane, turned to the left and north, and immediately fell into the main London Road, which had been climbing from the valley below and was here at the thirteenth milestone.

The Old Road, suffering no deviation, plunged into a wood, and reappeared just at the summit of the pass, perhaps a quarter of a mile further. It is the point where the Ordnance Map marks a height of 683 feet, and where one finally leaves the valley of the Itchen to enter that of the Wey.

ST. PETER'S, ROPLEY.

We are much indebted to Mr. R. C. Turner, Honorary Organist and Choirmaster of our Parish Church for nearly 40 years, for the following particulars respecting the Restoration of the Church.

RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH.

In the year 1891 the question of the restoration of the Church was seriously considered, for it had been discovered that the building had fallen into such a state of dilapidation as to be actually insecure ; but it was not until the Rev. W. H. Leak—the newly appointed Vicar—took up his residence here in 1892 that the work was really taken in hand. Previously to this Mr. Leak had been Vicar of Bishop's Sutton, where he had undertaken the task of restoring the Church in that parish, and at the time of his appointment to the benefice of Ropley had already succeeded in raising £1,000 for the purpose.

The urgency of immediate restoration of Ropley Church was manifest to all, and at once Mr. Leak found himself surrounded by parishioners ready to help forward in every way possible a scheme of restoration. In 1894 a Restoration Committee consisting of Miss Hagen, the Rev. Canon Wynter-Gibbon, Mr. Norris, Mr. W. Barnard, and the Vicar, the Rev. W. H. Leak, was formed and an appeal made for the necessary funds.

This appeal was made directly by Mr. Leak himself and entailed the writing of at least 4,000 letters. So generous a response was made that in a very short time no less than £2,300 had been subscribed and in 1896 the work of restoration was commenced, and for over a year the usual Church Services were held Sunday by Sunday in the Day School, where the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion were also administered. The chief work undertaken was an entirely new roof, new East and West windows, the extension of the North Aisle to the same length as the Nave, the underpinning of the four huge oak beams supporting the tower by bases of concrete, the removal of the old gallery at the West end which provided ample accommodation for the Choir in those days, and behind them sat several of the older parishioners of the labouring class in their immaculate smock frocks. The old floor was excavated and replaced by concrete and laid with pitch pine blocks, and the high-back pews of former days

gave place to chairs. It was during floor excavations in the South Transept, immediately under where the new organ now stands, that an interesting discovery was made in connection with a former casting of the Church Bells, probably at the time when " John Gilberd did contrive to cast from four this peal of five." Previous to this it was believed that the bells had been re-cast in an adjoining field but while the work of restoration was going on the workmen found in the South Transept the remains of a furnace and pieces of old bell metal which conclusively prove that it was there that the bells were re-cast. The Chancel was entirely re-arranged, the large family pews were removed and the present Choir Stalls erected in their place. The greater part of the Restoration Scheme having been completed a Service of Dedication and Thanksgiving was held on Tuesday, April 27th, 1897, when in the regretted absence of the Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Thorold) the sermon was preached by the Bishop of Guildford. It was at this service that the Village Choir first appeared in Cassocks and Surplices. Congratulating the Vicar—the Rev. W. H. Leak—on the work he had achieved the Bishop wrote :— " I greatly enjoyed the service on Tuesday and I marvel to see the Church in its present state."

THE NEW ORGAN.

The beautiful new Organ built by Mr. Binns, of Leeds, and dedicated by the Ven. Archdeacon of Winchester (Dr. Fearon) in March, 1911, took the place of the old harmonium, which had done duty for over 40 years.

THE CHURCH.

"Ropley Church is a most interesting one," says Mr. W. G. Horseman, of Southampton, in a letter to the Rev. H. W. C. Geldart. "The nave certainly, and the chancel probably, are of exactly the same plan as in the first half of the 12th century. Of the same date is the south transept, now converted into the tower. Probably this was done late in the 14th or early in the 15th century and the South Chapel was added to the chancel late in the 13th century.

"The North Chapel and eastern part of the north aisle appear to be early 19th century work, and the western part of the south aisle was built in the restoration work of 1896.

"One regrets the removal of the old altar rails, and the position of the font almost touching the west wall of the north aisle must be most inconvenient."

August 30th, 1918.

THE OLD PULPIT AND ALTAR RAILS.

OLD STONE WORK.

Mr. Woodhouse says: "I am told by those who can well remember it that the pulpit formerly stood in the centre of the church, supported on four posts, *under* which was the entrance to the pew on the left belonging to the Grove and occupied by Mr. Onslow. From there it was removed to the south side of the altar, and erected against the east wall. But it did not remain there long, and was removed again into the anomalous and inconvenient position where it still remains, under the first arch on the south side of the chancel, with the back towards the chancel aisle."

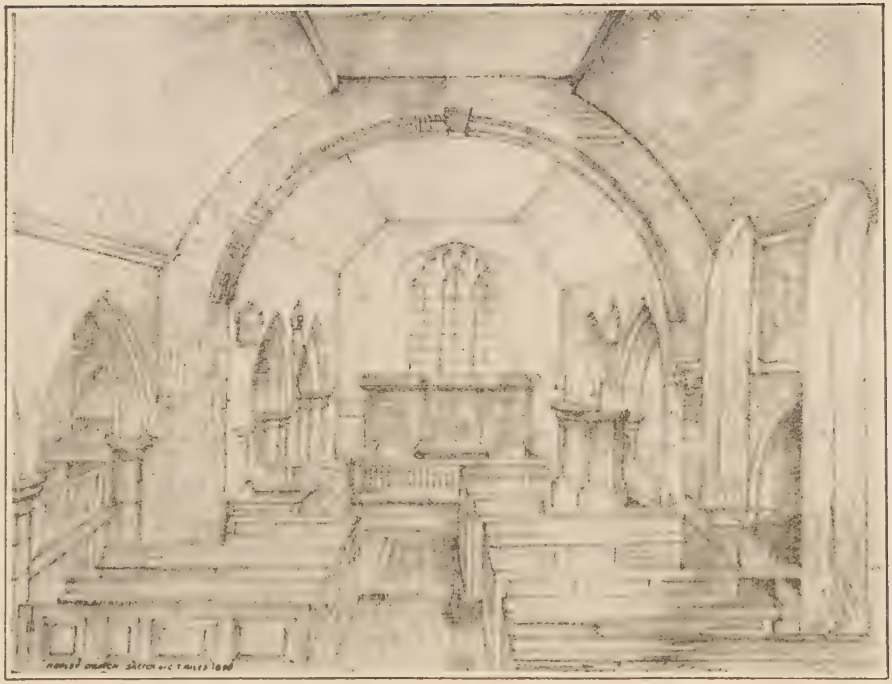
* * * * * * * * * * *

"The oak altar rails were brought from Buriton near Petersfield and cut to fit the place. The old rails *before* these were partly made into seats and partly left in Hale's shop."

———o———

OLD STONE WORK.

"Fragments of the stonework of the north aisle are to be seen in many places, especially in the garden at the Vicarage. They are much broken and defaced, but



ROPLEY PARISH CHURCH. THE CHANCEL AS SEEN FROM THE OLD GALLERY, 1896.

enough remains to show that there was at least one Romanesque pillar with boldly moulded capital and base."

"I strongly suspect that the stone near my stable door, which is apparently intended to serve as a horse block, is part of the pedestal of the Font. In size and shape it much resembles it; and there is a hole bored down through the inside of it, which was perhaps part of the drain."

CHURCH REGISTERS.

The earliest entries go back to 1538, in the reign of Henry VIII., when Church Registers were first kept. The original books were rebound in 1906 by the kindness of the late Archdeacon Fearon, at his expense, and presented to the Church. This, and the next book, covering roughly the second half of the 17th century, now form two neat volumes which are a valuable relic of antiquity.

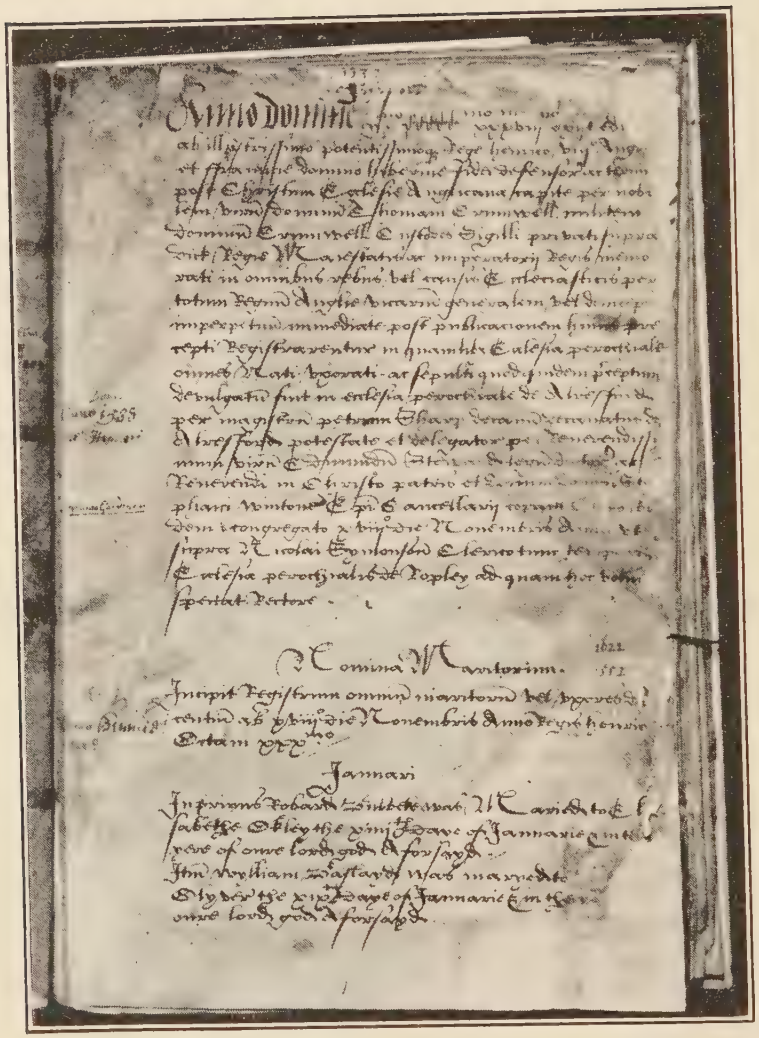
The registers as a whole are incomplete, and there are several gaps—one big one in the marriages from 1702 to 1755. From this date the entries are continuous down to the present time.

In the old days the greater number of people were illiterate, as is shown by the fact that whole pages are marked by crosses in place of signatures. Frequently both the parties married and the witnesses to their marriage were unable to sign their names.

Another interesting feature is the fact that so many Ropley names go on from generation to generation, and exist among us still. Instances are Budd, Norgate, Privett, Windebank, Passingham, Larkham, Lambourne and Hale. This shows that the love of change was less marked than it is at present.

STONE TABLET ON WALL OF ROPLEY CHURCH.

Mr. Wm. Roughcliff
late of Sherbourne in Com Dorset
Button seller
dy'd suddenly in this parish in his
journey homeward March 4th
A.D. 1719/20 and was buried the
7th (?) under a stone
opposite inscrib'd
W.R. &c.



FIRST PAGE OF CHURCH REGISTER.

THE CHURCH BELLS.

These are of great interest. The original inscriptions on the five old bells are as follows :—

I as treble doo beggin S.K. 1701.
Fear God, Honnare the King S.K. 1701.
Samuel Knight mead this ring.
Robert Gatlin of London fecit 1749.
Unto this church I doo you call. Death to the grave will somans all.
John Gilberd did contrive to cast from four this peal of five (FIFE)."

In 1927 all the bells were recast by Messrs. Gillett & Johnston, of Croydon, and the original inscriptions copied. At the same time a new treble bell was added making a peal of six. This bell is inscribed :—

To the glory of God and in memory of Jacob and Mary Hagen also P.G.W., J.S.O'H. and A.H.S. The gift of M. S. Hagen, 1927.

At the same time a brass tablet was placed on the south wall of the church bearing the following inscription :

" To commemorate the gift of Marianna Sophia Hagen for the restoration of the church bells and the provision of a new treble bell. This brass is dedicated by grateful parishioners. 1927."

The notes, diameters and weights of the present bells are as follows :—

			Cwts.	*Qrs.*	*lbs.*
1.	D sharp	28″	4	2	6
2.	C sharp	30″	5	1	3
3.	B	33″	7	0	2
4.	A sharp	34½″	7	2	9
5.	G sharp	38½″	10	3	19
6.	F sharp	43″	15	0	23
			50	2	6

The dedication service took place on May 31st, 1927. The ceremony was performed by the Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Woods).

THE BELLS.

The bells peal forth across the plain,
The softly undulating hills,
The woodlands clothed in summer sheen—
Their music all the silence fills.

Long were they mute and death-like still;
No happy bride their greeting heard,
No mourner by a new made grave
Re-echoed one sad voiceless word.

On Sabbath morns no clear-rung call
Bade us to seek our Father's face,
Believe His promise, trust His word,
And rest on His unchanging grace.

And now that they chime out once more
May their sweet music never fall
On ears unheeding, hearts grown cold,
Regardless of their gracious call.

And when the years have onward rolled,
And these frail bodies sleep in dust,
May generations still arise
For God to live, in Him to trust.

M. S. HAGEN.

THE CHURCH PLATE.

This is reckoned among the finest specimens of Elizabethan plate in the county. The chalice and paten-cover of silver were made in 1592 and are beautifuly ornamented. The chalice is unusually deep and widens at the lip. The pair of flagons (also of silver) have the inscription "The gift of John Wellins and Jane Andross to the parish of Ropley, Hampshire, in memory of Mr. William Andross, a pious and charitable inhabitant of the said parish, who died 17th April 1714, aged 70 years."

A silver alms dish is inscribed: "The gift of Jane Andross, late wife of Wm. Andross to the parish church of Ropley, 1715."

In March, 1911, an old pewter christening basin or bowl was discovered under a platform on which the harmonium stood, and which was removed prior to the erection of the organ. It bears the following inscription:—"The guifte of James Parry to the parish church of Ropley, for a Christening bason, who died the 8th April 1672."

Before 1871 the Holy Communion was administered but twice a year—at Christmas and Easter.

The quaintest of old Hymn-books were used in church. In one hymn a reference was made to Martha, who "Lost her time and temper too!"

A Clerk (Henry Turner) used to sit below the reading desk and give out the hymns.

THE CHALICE.

THE CHURCH CLOCK.

On April 30th, 1902, a meeting was held to consider what steps, if any, should be taken to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty, King Edward VII. Mr. R. C. Turner, Chairman of the Parish Council, presided.

Later on it was decided that a church clock, with two dials, if possible, should be erected.

The clock was officially started at noon on Wednesday, October 7th, 1903, and dedicated at the evening service on Sunday, October 18th, when an impressive sermon on "The value of time" was preached by the Vicar, the Rev. W. H. Leak.

THE WAR MEMORIAL.

The names of the 40 men of Ropley who fell in the Great War are inscribed on a handsome tablet of Carrara marble placed on the North side of the chancel arch with the text beneath: "Their name liveth for evermore." The cost of the tablet which amounted to about £150 was met by public subscriptions. The dedication service on March 10th, 1921, was conducted by the Ven. A. E. Daldy, Archdeacon of Winchester.

THE REREDOS.

This forms a pleasing addition to the East end of the church. It is made of English oak and has six panels, and a canopy with three shields inscribed "I.H.S." and carved with bunches of grapes. Subscriptions were collected by Mrs. Wynne, of Ropley Lodge, and the work was executed by Messrs. Laverty, of Winchester. The reredos was dedicated on February 7th, 1924, by Bishop Taylor Smith, Chaplain General of the Forces, and one of the trustees of the living.

* * * * * * * *

The following are extracts from the records in the Cathedral Library at Winchester, made with the kind help of Canon Goodman, the librarian:—

Before the dissolution of the monasteries Ropley together with Bishop's Sutton, was annexed to the Priory of Merton, in Surrey. Thus, soon after the Norman Conquest, the ancient parish church came to be known

only as a chapel, and the official designation, found in a register of the end of the 13th century is "The church of Sattone (Bishop's Sutton) together with the chapel of Roppele." Bishop's Sutton is placed first probably on account of the Bishop's residence being there.

In addition to the parish church, the lords of the Manor were allowed the privilege of a private chapel, and a register at the beginning of the 14th century states that Henry, Bishop of Winchester, granted to William Gerveis licence to hear divine service in the chapel of his Manor of Roppele.

About half a century later Roger Gervays received a licence to celebrate divine service in the oratory of his manor.

As Ropley was joined to Bishop's Sutton there are few references to it in the ecclesiastical records and there is no mention of the institution of Vicars of Ropley previously to the separation of the parishes in 1882.

ROPLEY VICARS.

1538	Nicholas Symonson.	1746	P. Henvill.
1540	Thomas Gray.	1757	W. Howley.
1544	John Gymmell.	1796	W. Howley.
1545	James Meyke.	1813	Bishop of London
1545	John Venables.	1828—1848	Archbishop of Canterbury.
1552	Nicholas Alexander.		
1565	Cuthbert Dickonson.	1811	W. Evans.
1573	Edward Clive.	1818	S. Maddock.
1598	Roger Hedges.	1871	T. Woodhouse.
1622—3	John Lowman.	1891	F. H. Baring (a few months only).
1672	John London.		
1711	Jos. Alexander.	1891	W. H. Leak.
1724	Henry Cooper	1912	H. S. Kelsey.
		1915	S. R. Cambie.
		1916	H. W. C. Geldart.

THE ARCHBISHOP.

The last house in the village is generally called "The Archbishop's Cottage." Its roof is a thatched one and it is remarkably picturesque, and of the old-world type now rapidly disappearing. It is celebrated as having been for a while the home of William Howley, Archbishop

ARCHBISHOP HOWLEY.

Lambeth March 12. 1845

Dear Sir,

In looking over some old papers I have found the enclosed:— The copyhold lease to which one of these papers refers how forms part of the Bramshott property:— The other papers, transmitted under a different cover, relate to a charge on the Gloucestershire tithes, which may hopefully be of use, if the claims of the Vicars should ever be disputed.

I remain
Dear Sir,
Your humbly Obd Servant
W. Asaph

Revd S Maddock

AUTOGRAPH LETTER—ARCHBISHOP HOWLEY.

of Canterbury, who crowned William IV. 1830, and Queen Victoria, 1837. His father was the Vicar of Ropley, and as an infant he was placed out at nurse in this cottage. Neither of its two bedrooms possessed, until quite recently, any windows at all, and were consequently in a state of total darkness! They were approached by a rough kind of ladder.

I give an extract from "The Letters of Peter Lombard :—

"Another object of interest here (West Meon) is the marriage register of Wm. Howley, Vicar of Ropley—a village some seven miles off. Why he came here to be married I know not*, perhaps it was because his wife was below him in social position. She could not write her name, and a cross stands for her signature. They became the parents of him who was called 'the last Prince Archbishop'—a man of real dignity and of vast munificence. Merit, or good fortune or both, thus raised the son of a peasant girl to an exalted position, and he showed himself as worthy to fill it."

* * * * * * * * * *

* Perhaps the bride's home was in West Meon?

M.S.H.

THE CHURCHYARD.

This has, no doubt, been used as a burying place for centuries, and in the older parts there are many old vaults, some of which were found when props were placed under the ancient yew tree on the north side of the church.

Two recent additions have been made to the Churchyard. One of these was in 1906 and the consecration was performed by Dr. Boutflower, then Bishop of Dorking. As the ground was nearly full a second addition was rendered necessary which was made in 1928. The service was conducted by the same Bishop, now of Southampton.

A note by the Vicar says :—"I should like to place on record the fact that on the two separate occasions here recorded, Miss Hagen has most generously given land for the extension of the Churchyard. At the present time (1929) there is provision for some years to come."

THE ANCIENT YEW TREE.

The ancient yew tree in the Churchyard near the south porch was formerly surrounded by a wooden seat used by the parishioners before the commencement of

service. It is much decayed and the centre of the tree is a hollow shell. The branches have recently been propped so as to avoid damage from wind or snow.

Yew trees were planted in Churchyards because in olden times the Churchwardens had to supply wood for "The Bow" and the wood of the yew tree was the most suitable.

AN OLD TOMBSTONE.

FROM MR. WOODHOUSE'S NOTE BOOK.

On a very old tombstone near the south porch of Ropley Church is the following inscription, illegible except in a very favourable light:

In memory of
Elizabeth Wife
Of Richard Gooder
& Daughter of
Robart Ween
Who departed
This life September
Ye 3. 1708. Aged 52.

* * * * * * * * * * *

It is seldom that one meets with a mere tombstone so old as this. The stonecutter seems to have been rather unskilled in his work, but he must have chosen a very durable stone. Inscriptions depend very much on the light and therefore on the hour of the day and the kind of weather. A slight shadow thrown by the sun at the proper angle brings out the letters.

BURIALS IN WOOLLEN.

Memoranda occur frequently in the certificate that deceased was buried in woollen. They extend over several years in the early part of the 18th century.

I have understood that this was made compulsory in order to encourage the woollen trade.

THE OLD VICARAGE.

In the days of the Howleys this was rather smaller and more homely than it is now. It had a great stack of chimneys in the middle. The entrance projected from the front, and was approached from the road by a little straight

path leading up to it by a wicket gate. A gravel path ran across, parallel with the front of the house, and extended the whole width of the garden. Where the lawn now is was thickly covered with ornamental trees, among which were a Judas tree and a fine horse chestnut. Five limes stood where one remains at the end of the house. A lane ran across between Mr. Duthy's grounds and the Vicarage garden, and continued down past "The Cottage" into the Petersfield Road. The Vicarage lane did not exist.

FROM MR. WOODHOUSE'S NOTE BOOK.

* * * * * * * * * * *

The Vicarage was enlarged by the addition of a new wing, and the stables and coachhouse built by the Rev. F. H. Baring, Vicar, 1891.

I may note here that the lane running past Rotley House was moved to the left by my father. The "Old Road" track runs close by the Avenue, and was once continued close to the house.

THE OLD PARSONAGE.

THE OLD PARSONAGE.

"All that Decimal Grange or Parsonage House of Ropley with the tithe barn, conveyed to J. Fisher by T. Budd and R. Barker, 25th September, 1798." This is the earliest date found in the deeds relating to the house now known as the old Parsonage. The existence of the tithe barn suggests that this may formerly have been the Vicar's residence before the present Vicarage was built, though the actual evidence is not forthcoming. It was most probably called the Old Parsonage to distinguish it from the new Vicarage.

THE NEW SCHOOLS.

The present handsome and commodious schools which were built by the Maddock family in memory of the Rev. Robert Maddock who died in India, where he was a Missionary, were opened on May 7th, 1869. A stone tablet let into the wall bears the monogram R.N.M.

On this occasion a Wellingtonia was planted in the school garden by the Rev. S. Maddock, to commemorate which the following beautiful lines were written by Miss Anna Letitia Waring—author of "Father, I know that all my life"—who was a friend of the Maddock family.

THE PLANTING OF THE WELLINGTONIA.

Bring forth the sapling forest tree
While yet the hand and heart are strong
And press the earth about the roots
And bid it live and flourish long.
Memorial Tree of Sire and Son
Of him who has the victory won
And him whose race is well-nigh run.
Long may it live—the Pastor's Tree!
Long shade with branches widely spread
The Village School we fondly raise
In memory of the sainted dead.
Thence may the lowliest of the land
Go forth in many a goodly band
As "Trees of Righteousness" to stand.
Nor all unfitting here to place
The Tree which bears a warrior's name.
A warrior's might the Christian needs
For battle-fields unknown to fame.

Oh friends ! Ye too the foe shall chase
If trusting in a Saviour's grace
Ye fight the Fight and run the Race.

* * * * * * * * * * *

These lines illuminated and framed are hung upon the schoolroom wall.

The Schools were enlarged in 1912 by the addition of a large classroom, at a cost of about £600. There is now accommodation for about 180 children.

THE NIGHTINGALES.

The sun had set upon that garden fair
Where nightingales oft sang at eventide,
And one who loved them stood beneath the trees
And listened to their song and called them to his side.

But he had willed to leave all he had loved,
And sail away across the stormy main,
" Farewell," he said, " One day I shall return
And hear and see my nightingales again."

Once more 'tis eventide, a summer night,
But silence reigns within that garden fair,
The breeze alone sends forth a murmuring sound
That dies away upon the scented air.

A vessel lies at anchor far away,
And one there is who counts he soon will be
Once more upon his own dear native shore
And hear the nightingales' sweet melody.

But ere his eyes could see the great white cliffs
God's messenger had called his soul away,
No more his ears would hear that song so sweet
That he had listened to at close of day.

But it was said by some on summer eves
They heard again the birds sing sweet and clear
And midst the trees where he was wont to stand
Once more his nightingales now hovered near.

FRANCES ANN BAYNHAM.

There was a deeply-rooted conviction in the Maddock family that the nightingales which Mr. Robert Maddock loved, and which used to sing in the Vicarage Avenue

became silent when he left for India. But from the day on which the news of his death reached home the nightingales began again to sing.

He died on the eve of his intended embarkation for home.

A LESSON IN GEOGRAPHY.

The first Geography lesson given here (at the old schools) was undertaken by Miss Maddock as she has told me. This was the manner of it :—

" Now children, this is a map. A map shows us the shape of a country. This is England where we all live. Towards your head, at the top of the map is the *North*, to your feet is the *South*. On your right hand is the *East*, on your left hand is the *West*. Now children, tell me what is towards your head ? "

Chorus of smiling children, and many hands raised : " If you please, mam, my feet."

THE COFFEE ROOM.

This building was erected by me (M.S.H.) in memory of my parents for a men's recreation and clubroom and various religious and other meetings. It was opened by the Vicar, the Rev. Thomas Woodhouse and the Rev. A. Stogdon, of Barton Stacey, on Monday, October 6th, 1883.

" FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE."

When Mr. Samuel Maddock first came here as Vicar of Ropley, over a century ago, he was intensely disliked and regarded with whole-hearted aversion and hatred because " he was a good man and a just "—one who was not afraid to rebuke the wrong-doer and to stand firmly for the cause of God and of true religion. He was also sternly opposed to the smuggling practices so largely carried on in Ropley and to the drinking habits which prevailed at that time.

I have understood that on Sundays many used to be seen sitting amid the boughs of the great yew tree in the churchyard (which at that time spread as far as the porch), freely imbibing.

The people's hatred of Mr. Maddock grew more and more pronounced as time went on, until a regular system of persecution arose, and all was done that could be thought of and devised to molest, injure and annoy both himself and the members of his family.

One Sunday morning a pail of dirty water was prepared in the porch of what is now the blacksmith's house, ready to be thrown over Mr. and Mrs. Maddock on their way home from church, followed by their children walking "two and two." But although aimed with great skill the missile just missed its mark.

On another Sunday when on their way to the Church Mr. and Mrs. Maddock were greeted by an effigy of the former dressed in his "bands" and gown hanging by the neck from a bough of the elm tree which until recently used to stand at the corner of the allotment ground. Many and many of such incidents occurred, of which Miss Maddock has often told me, though I fear that I have forgotten the greater part of them. But Mr. Maddock stood his ground unmoved and still hoped in time to win his parishioners over by love.

At last it was decided to make in some indirect manner an attempt upon his life. A great deal of secret plotting and consultation (as was afterwards discovered) took place amongst the young men in the village ale-house. (Possibly at "The Five Bells" at the top of the village near the pond—now turned into cottages). This was known as "Hell Corner." A young man who then worked for Mr. Maddock was one of the conspirators, but he was good-natured and of a kindly heart. He was one of the few who liked and believed in Mr. Maddock, and it was much against his will to be drawn into the plot. But he was afraid to "stand alone." He determined, however, to save Mr. Maddock from the threatened danger, were it possible, to do so—come what might of his interference.

Every Friday evening a little service used to be held in a cottage at Charlwood about two miles from the Vicarage, conducted by the Vicar, to which he and Mrs. Maddock used to drive. One day this man came to Mr. Maddock saying "I beg of you, sir, not to go to the Cottage meeting at Charlwood next Friday."

"For what reason?" enquired the Vicar.

"I can't say more, sir, but I do pray you not to go—there is danger in it."

Mr. Maddock was not to be put off, especially as the young man could give no reason. "It is my duty," he

said, " and I shall certainly go." He, however, begged his wife not to accompany him on that occasion, meaning if there were danger of any sort to face it alone. But she was as firm as her husband, saying " We will go together, whatever it may mean. If there is danger I must share it with you." So they started, Mr. Maddock putting his wife and himself under God's special care and protection and so fearing nothing at all—mysterious as the whole thing seemed. The evening was dark and ominous looking and heavy storm clouds lowered overhead.

On the long hill at Monkwood there is a steep declivity leading down from the high road into a lane. The sides of it are covered with blackberry bushes, wild flowers and bracken ; there is no rail or fence to protect against a fall. At this spot, as the sequel showed, a number of conspirators were concealed, and their intention was to jump out suddenly as soon as the Vicar appeared, cut the traces and hurl his carriage down this declivity into the lane below, trusting that in this way his neck might perhaps be broken, or that at the least he might receive some very serious injury.

" Man proposes, and God disposes " and who shall say that it was not certainly so in this case ? At the very moment of action there came a flash of lurid lightning, so vivid that it seemed to rend the heavens (" Never was such a flash seen before," said the men afterwards) and a clap of terrific thunder followed it instantly. Some say that a " *Thunbolt* " fell, but this may have been imaginary. Anyway the men were terribly alarmed and conscience stricken, believing that the Heavenly Powers had intervened to save their victim. They rushed up to Mr. Maddock, confessing all and begging for his forgiveness.

This incident is said to have made a great impression at the time, and for years afterwards it seems to have been remembered and discussed. Ever since my childhood's days I have met with people here who had heard of it from their parents and they still often say " My father told me." Miss Maddock who lived to an advanced age, has often given me the particulars of this incident. A truly remarkable one indeed.

It is comforting and cheering to reflect that Mr. Maddock lived to overcome entirely all dislike and opposition, and become the beloved of his parishioners, who learnt to respect and honour him greatly. He died at the age of 85 years.

Mr. Maddock's preaching and his manner of conducting the Church services would indeed cause wonder in these days! One Christmas morning when a child I can remember his saying:—

"Now I am not going to keep you long to-day, my friends, for I know there's that nice piece of beef waiting for you at home and that *beautiful* plum-pudding is in the saucepan!"

On another occasion during his sermon he shouted out, "Young men, take care whom you marry—the devil always goes with the women!" This was rather naughty of him because he had such a devoted wife and such excellent daughters, and indeed all the members of the family were deeply attached to one another.

One Sunday morning, in his wonderfully realistic manner and accompanied with some half-humorous gesture he said:—

"The devil's in *London*, my friends." And then louder: "He's nearer than that—he's in *Hampshire*!" Then, after a pause and still more impressively: "He's even nearer still—he's in *Ropley*!" Then, leaning over the pulpit, and very impressively: "He's in this *Church*, my friends!" And finally, in a whisper: "The devil's in our hearts—in yours and mine, and we must resist him!" This was before my time, but I have been told it word for word by an old gentleman who was present on the occasion. The Sunday after the day on which Mr. Maddock's eldest daughter was married to Mr. Floud, his text, as I have been told, was "The Flood came and took them away!"

Mr. Maddock had a very acute sense of humour, and he was a born "story-teller." I have heard my father say that he could hold a whole dinner-table of guests entranced, or move them to perfect fits of laughter. "Get Mr. Maddock to tell a story." This sufficed. He was of a very genial and kindly disposition and possessed many deeply attached and devoted friends. My father has often told me that the incidents and coincidences and marvellous "deliverances" in his life were truly astonishing, and that his biography should most certainly be preserved. Indeed it would seem as if the whole Maddock family had been specially and wonderfully led and guided. I fear that I have forgotten many or most of the anecdotes which go to show this.

POSTCRIPT.

As time went on, and the character and disposition of the good Vicar became better understood, he gradually won the respect and admiration of all. He was an ideal village pastor. In the whole neighbourhood his name was, I believe, "one to conjure by," and to his own parishioners he became a father and friend. Having for a short time studied for the medical profession, his knowledge in this respect stood him in good stead in a village remote from a doctor's aid. He also seems to have possessed a certain amount of legal knowledge, and was thus enabled to draw up short wills in proper form, as well as to prescribe for many of the simpler maladies of his parishioners. And thus "I be going down to Mr. Maddick" was the cry on all occasions.

My first recollection of our dear old Vicar was that as a tiny child he gave me a picture book as a reward for being "a good little girl in church." Children always loved him; they were attracted by his cheery manner, and amusing little anecdotes, as also by the little packets of lollipops and lozenges hidden in his waistcoat pocket!

During the last few years of his life his enquiry of every new acquaintance was "Can you tell me where I can get a new pair of legs?"

Pleasant little surprises seem often to have been sprung upon Mr. Maddock by those who loved and appreciated him. His daughter has told me how on one occasion when his old horse, "Evely," was becoming rather infirm and slow, he drove over to lunch with Mr. Scott, of Rotherfield Park. When the gig was brought to the door to convey him home again, behold a young and handsome animal was between the shafts! "This is not my horse," said Mr. Maddock, "there is some mistake." "Oh yes, it is," was Mr. Scott's reply. "It is my gift to you."

As he grew older and became more infirm, my father, who was almost as a son to him, became his help and stay. The closest intimacy existed between Ropley House and the Vicarage, and Mr. Maddock used smilingly to say that he could hardly have preached his sermon if Mr. Hagen had not come into the vestry to help him on with his gown!

My father passed away just one year and five months before his aged Vicar, and I think this loss was a great grief to Mr. Maddock during the last months of his life. His body was laid to rest, together with other members of his family in a vault (now bricked up) beneath the Communion Table.

His personality and influence were remarkably strong, and even as I write these words, though my recollection of him is so distant and not always clear, I experience a strange touch of emotion and feel that I can never forget our dear old Vicar.

The following is an Extract from the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MR. HORACE MEYER, of East Tisted.

"My friend and neighbour, the Rev. S. Maddock, Vicar of Ropley, came to preach for me when 83 years of age. He was the son of a medical man at Nottingham, who had a young assistant, much persecuted by the others on account of his religion. On one occasion an inkstand was thrown over him as he knelt by his bedside in prayer. But he only remarked that he wished he could wipe away sin as easily as the ink. This conduct so impressed one of the doctor's sons—Mr. Benjamin Maddock—that he began to read his Bible every night. And then our friend, his brother Samuel, did the same, in order not to be outdone. This was the means of his conversion.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

The following is a re-print from "The Hampshire Chronicle," of November 2nd, 1818.

"On Thursday last, John Lacey, publican of Ropley, and Tom Baker, publican of Bishop's Sutton, with John Ivy, of Ropley, were brought before Messrs. Rawlinson, Duthy and Barton, his Majesty's Justices of the Peace at Alresford, and charged with having disturbed the Rev. Samuel Maddock while performing divine service at his parish church at Bishop's Sutton, by uttering oaths and curses, and pursuing other most indecorous conduct. They were required to find securities in a bond of £50 each to secure their appearance at the next Quarter Sessions. It is hoped that the example made of these three young men will be a warning to others not to interrupt any clergyman in the discharge of his parochial duties, nor to disturb any congregation assembled for the worshipping of Almighty God."

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I heard from an old woman of 85 that when Mrs. Maddock died, all the school girls had bonnets with black

ribbon round them and black capes or shawls. Of these she told me "We were very proud. We wore them for six months afterwards."

THE SILK DRESS.

I have been told that one day it was whispered in the village that Mrs. Maddock had recently purchased a new silk dress, which she intended to wear for the first time on the following Sunday. In a village so small as Ropley very trivial matters would be known and discussed. Some of the rough lads thought that this would be an excellent opportunity upon which to vent their spite. So during the evening service they procured from a neighbouring ditch some filthy black mud with which they thickly coated the stile over which the Vicar's wife would climb on her return home. In the semi-darkness the mud was invisible, and needless to add that the new silk dress was spoilt !

THE TESTIMONIAL.

The following amusing little anecdote used often to be told by Mr. Maddock "against himself." But it required his inimitable style and manner to do it justice.

For many years he acted as Chaplain at the Workhouse on Tichborne Down, near Alresford. Though beloved by many there, the Chairman of the Board was bitterly opposed to him. (This must be remembered).

One day when walking in the streets of London Mr. Maddock saw in a second-hand bookseller's shop some volumes of "Common Prayer" in very good condition. As the Workhouse Chapel was in need of such, he bought all the copies, and on returning home presented them.

Some time after this Mr. Maddock one morning received an important looking official letter from the Workhouse Authorities, requesting his attendance there without fail at a given time.

"Depend upon it, Sophie," said he, turning to his daughter, and handing her the letter, "*it's a testimonial.* They have been getting one up for me, and are about to present it !"

Miss Maddock agreed as to this probability, and much fun and pleasing anticipation had they in regard to it. "A silver teapot, I expect it is," he said. "Yes,

and may be a sugar-basin and cream jug as well ; and who knows, even a pair of sugar tongs ! "

As the day approached, his smile became more and more charming and genial and his anticipation more keen.

On the eventful morning when about to start, and the gig was waiting at the door, he said to his daughter, " Sophie, bring me my best great-coat and my new gloves, and give my hat an extra brush. And are my boots quite nicely blacked and shining, and do I look my *very best* ? "

So off he started. Arrived at the Workhouse there was no one to receive him. Not a word, not a sign. He was ushered into the long, cold, desolate Board-room, where he remained seated alone, and waited there for a long time wondering and wondering.

At length the members of the Board filed in and took their seats, with scarce a word of recognition. Mr. Maddock stood and remained upon his feet—no one placing a chair for him. He began to feel somewhat like a culprit upon his trial, so he used to tell us.

At length the mystery was explained. In a very severe tone, and handing one of the Prayer Books to him, the Chairman said :

" Do you know this book ? Do you deny having presented it to the Workhouse ? "

" Certainly I know it," said Mr. Maddock. " I bought it with others in London the other day."

And then it turned out that these books which Mr. Maddock had purchased in all good faith and had never particularly examined were *Unitarian* Prayer Books ! And this was his crime.

Of course the whole Board knew that he was not to blame, that all was absolutely unintentional on his part, and that this incident was arranged merely to annoy him.

I am unable to remember the exact ending, but it is well to know that the good Vicar was enabled at last to win over even the opposing Chairman, by his good nature and forgiving spirit.

Later on the parishioners here *did* present their beloved Vicar with a handsome testimonial, which my father was instrumental in getting up, and for which I as a child collected.

THE DOG AND THE CHEESE.

One more little incident concerning Mr. Maddock I feel inclined to relate as showing two characteristics of his nature—kindness, and a sense of justice towards animals. The story has often been related to me by an old man here who loves telling it.

A boy named Joe used to work daily in the Vicarage garden. One morning Mr. Maddock from his study window saw this lad eating his dinner whilst seated upon a stone.

Up came the dog and stood close by, patiently waiting for a bit. The boy held out to him a piece of cheese, but just as the animal was about to take it, there came a severe crack across his nose with a stick. The dog yelped and the boy laughed. Mr. Maddock said nothing. But the next day, he called up Joe, and said to him : " Do you like figgy cake ? "

" Oh yes, sir."

" Then here is a slice for you." So saying he held out to the delighted boy a large piece of delicious plum cake.

His hand was outstretched to receive it, when bringing a stick from behind his back, the Vicar cut a sharp crack across Joe's knuckles. " There ! " he said, " now you know what poor Carlo felt yesterday."

The next day the Vicar called the lad into his study and after a few words of kind reproof, handed him a large slice of cake in return for a promise never so to transgress again.

THE WONDERFUL DREAM.

Many years ago, and long " before my time," Mr. Maddock's wife had a most remarkable dream of premonition, which was that she *must* go to Bishop's Sutton (the next village, and at that time attached to Ropley) without a moment's delay. She immediately told her husband, who at first only smiled. But so intense was her conviction that this " call " must be obeyed that it was in vain to dissuade her from her purpose. As soon as the manservant arrived in the morning, the carriage was ordered (much to his astonishment) and the Vicar and his wife got in. " Where to, sir ? " enquired the man. " I don't know," said Mrs. Maddock, " but drive towards Sutton." They proceeded on their way, still not knowing their destination. Then Mrs. Maddock said, " I feel we cannot do better than call at the house of Mrs. So and So ; she knows

everyone in the village, and would be sure to hear if anything were amiss." They did so. Stopping at a small house covered with creepers which remains unchanged, just at the entrance of the village—and which I know very well—knocking, and receiving no reply, they opened the door and entered. No one was visible. Something impelled Mrs. Maddock to run upstairs, and there—in her bedroom was the unfortunate woman *in the act of hanging herself*!

They were just in time to save her life. The chair on which she had stood was kicked away. A rope was round her neck.

* * * * * * * * * * *

This story is absolutely *true*, and has often been related to me by Mrs. Maddock's daughter herself—Miss Sophie Maddock—who lived to the age of 93 and was buried *here* in 1912.

A RESURRECTION.

An old man named Hall writing to me a few years ago from Tunbridge Wells upon some other subject, mentioned the fact that in his youth he had lived at one of the old cottages at Swelling Hill Pond, Ropley. He told me that once after a severe illness he was supposed to be dead. Indeed he had been laid in his coffin, which was just going to be closed down, when Mr. Maddock came to the house to offer his sympathy. He looked at the supposed dead lad, and after a few moments exclaimed "I'm sure he is still living!"

This indeed proved to be the case, and thus the boy's life was saved as by a "special providence."

ROPLEY HOUSE.

I have always understood that the young Mr. Duthys of Ropley House, secretly and covertly encouraged the smugglers, and even gave them their assistance. One of these especially was closely connected with them, and used to take his father's horses from the stables at night in order to give help. When Captain Duthy got to know this he was so angry that he turned his son out of the house. His sisters used to befriend him, and give him money, and other things, which they let down at night from a bedroom window.

There has always been something like a mystery in connection with Ropley House (which was built upon the foundation of a very much older house). When my father was enlarging it, I believe there was some story about a flight of steps being discovered "leading down no one knew where," and a man here said that there is "a Mediterranean" (!) passage down from Ropley House to some place near where the old school now stands.

The garden of Ropley House is a very old one—the sun-dial dates from 1652, and bears the inscription:

"As shade doth pass from line to line
By motion of the sun
So doth our age from time to time
Until our race be run."

* * * * * * * * * * *

The grass paths in the kitchen garden with the sun-dial in the centre have no doubt existed there for centuries.

THE SMUGGLERS.

It has been said that another cause for Mr. Maddock's unpopularity was the fact that he was so strongly opposed to the smuggling "trade," which was carried on largely and with a high hand in Ropley for many years. The whole village was more or less in league to cheat the custom-house and to import the smuggled whisky kegs into the district. These used to be brought up from Portsmouth in carts and wagons, and hidden in the woods, behind high hedges, or in the large cellars belonging to many of the cottages, also in the tithe barn of the old Parsonage. It was afterwards sold to the village people, who flocked, I am told, to Monkwood especially on Sunday evenings, when "it was like a Fair." The custom-house officials seem to have been utterly powerless to intervene.

Only last Saturday evening I was talking to a nice old man (James Smith) who seemed to know "chapter and verse" of all these affairs, probably in great part through his father, for the smuggling could hardly have lasted long after he could remember it. He told me of one man who lived at Monkwood, whose name was Henry Prior, and who was especially daring. He obtained a cart-load of the whisky kegs at Portsmouth, and was about to depart in triumph with these, when the custom-house "got wind of it," and he found he was pursued. He would not be baulked of his prize, and putting his horse to its full speed *he galloped*

the 30 *miles* from Portsmouth to Ropley, eluded his pursuers, and arrived safely with his kegs, which were hidden in the big beech wood on Monkwood hill.

I believe this man Prior became greatly changed during his last illness. He sent for Mr. Maddock, who prayed with him and consoled him. As a substantial proof of his repentance he destroyed a number of whisky kegs still remaining in his cellar. I understand that he was a great fighter, and generally " a very rough customer," as well as a smuggler.

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It was also in this same house that the smuggler of Mrs. Maddock's story resided. (P. 35—37).

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Extract from Letter from Admiral Henderson, dated 7th October, 1928.

We were extending our dining room, it was formerly the kitchen, and had a stone floor. The floor was removed and the stones used to floor the Loggia which we built in extension of the dining room.

Under the stone floor we came across some bricks which looked like foundations, but on clearing the rubbish away we saw that the bricks formed part of walls which continued down underground. We finally unearthed a brick lined chamber about 7ft. deep and 7-ft. square. It had been filled with earth and rubble, nothing else was found in it.

I asked James Hale if he could throw any light on the matter and he asked his old father who replied that he well remembered being told all about it by *his* granduncle. His story was as follows :—

At about the end of the 18th century the then owner of this house was a squire who held a very respected position in the county, he was a J.P., a Churchwarden, a subscriber to the Hunt, in fact he was everything that a respectable country squire ought to be. It was not generally known that he was also a leading light in the smuggling fraternity.

One day the Excise Officers arrived and asked him to sign a warrant for searching the cottage at the bottom of Monkwood hill, as they had information that contraband was hidden there. The Squire was very certain indeed that there was contraband there, so as it was about noon he said to the officers that dinner was nearly ready and that they had better have a bite, after which he would sign their warrant and they could proceed with their search.

They were given an exceptionally good dinner and meanwhile the Squire sent his groom posthaste to the cottage to tell them to get rid of the *stuff*. The *stuff* was accordingly lowered to the bottom of a 200-ft. well so that by the time the officers got there, there was nothing to be seen but an innocent cottage with its domestic contents.

According to Mr. George Hale, the name of that Squire was Major Lavender, whose family tombstone is at the east end of the north transept of the church.

The brick chamber which we unearthed was the gallant Major's own receptacle for contraband, and the Excise Officers little knew that they were dining right on op of some of the *stuff* they had come to seize.

A TALE OF SMUGGLERS.

Amongst the interesting stories of Old Ropley told by Mrs. Maddock, I give extracts from the following in booklet form, of which one copy alone appears to remain in the village :—

Go with me in imagination to a small cottage in a pretty valley* sheltered by beautiful hills and covered in summer by verdant green and studded with fleecy flocks of sheep. Do not be surprised if we find the door of yonder cottage bolted, and every voice within hushed at the sound of our footsteps. I have *often* found it so, but we will knock gently at the door, and knock again, and it will be opened by an aged careworn woman, who will greet us with the smile of gratitude bursting through the tears of grief for sorrows quickly coming upon her daughter and her grandchildren.

The old woman will conduct us to a chamber where we shall see the mother of eight children, pale and emaciated, stretched upon a bed of languishing, hoping against hope that her life may yet be spared for the sake of her children. You will hear her earnestly ask to hear the Word of God read to her, and desire that she may be raised up in bed that she may hear it more distinctly. Then she will beg us to kneel down, and her children and aged mother to surround the bed. I think I can never forget the deeply affecting scenes I have witnessed in that cottage. The poor mother with touching affection and maternal concern would express her anxiety and particular wish that *each* of her children should have provided for them a change of

*Monkwood, Ropley.

raiment; and as this was done by degrees so would she request that they should be shown to her. Sometimes she would have them put on her bed, and raise herself up to look at them. At another time she would beg them to be hung on the back of a chair at the foot of her bed that she might see them, and then have them neatly folded and put in a drawer. The tears would trickle down her pale cheeks as she carried her eye from child to child, as if she felt she had performed the *last* duty she would be permitted to do for them ere she died.

That these traces of her conduct may not be thought too highly wrought I ought to say that both she and her mother were far above the ordinary style of cottagers as respected their general manner of expressing themselves, as well as in the way of manifesting their feelings.

The question may now be asked: Had this poor dying woman no husband?—Had these children no father? Yes, but he was a smuggler—rarely to be seen by day, but by lamplight at all hours of the night might he be seen digging into the earth and burying his ill-gotten stores.

The master of our village school* occasionally visited this poor sick woman. Sunday was generally the day when he would go to read and pray with her. On one of these occasions her husband was at home, sitting by the bedside of his wife. As soon as he heard the steps of this good man upon the stairs he slunk into an inner room to avoid seeing him. The wife, half afraid of her husband's anger, pointed to the door. The good schoolmaster gently knocked and invited him to unite with them on that holy day in praying for his wife, to which at last he sullenly and reluctantly consented. He was a very hard-featured man, with a brow as if of brass, and a body of strong muscular power, but for this once his knee was bent, and as the good man prayed, a tear fell, the rugged hand was wiped across the brow, and his stony heart was softened. He arose, and slunk again into his hiding place in the inner room.

The little remaining strength of this poor woman was evidently lessening, and in less than a week the last struggle was over. It was better for her to be "present with the Lord" than to continue here in the face of events which were to follow.

But a short time elapsed before the man and his eldest son, a boy of fourteen, were suspected of being guilty of sheep stealing. They were watched, and detected in the very act of bringing the sheep into the cot. A warrant

* William Faichen.

was obtained, and the constable was immediately fetched. He did not go into the house at first, but walked round it, and looked in at the back window, through which he saw the son thrusting the skin of a sheep into the fire, and the slaughtered animal hanging up. He then burst open the door, snatched a part of the unconsumed skin from the fire, and seized the man and his son. They were committed to jail, stood their trial, and were sentenced to transportation for life. The son, from the consideration of his youthful age was, by the clemency of the judge, reprieved from perpetual banishment and limited to fourteen years of transportation. The rest of the children were sent to the Workhouse of a distant parish to which they belonged. Since that time I have entirely lost sight of them.

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If to some of us it seems at times as if from this earth of ours

"Glory and loveliness have passed away,"

yet we are bound to confess that much that was harsh and cruel has also passed. And it is well to remember this.

As a child I can remember my father telling me of a man here who had just completed his term of imprisonment for sheep stealing. Of course by that time the law had become more lenient. I think this was the last instance of this particular crime in Ropley.

FROM "THE HISTORY OF HAMPSHIRE."

During the 18th century the practice of smuggling possessed attractions for many Hampshire people. After the lapse of many years, during which smuggling has practically been extinct, the tales and traditions of the smugglers of last century still survive in the south of the county and far into its interior. There are many traditions of smuggling adventures, hairbreadth escapes and the capture of contraband goods landed during the last century, with tales of caves, secret cellars beneath cottages, and stores of spirits, tobacco and other smuggled goods as far north as Ropley."

ANNALS OF A VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER.

Such is the title of a little book written by Mrs. Maddock, wife of the then Vicar of Ropley. It is a most interesting and touching account of one William Faichen who was born in the parish of Alton in the year 1782—some 147 years ago.

During his childhood the family removed to Medstead, where his father (evidently a very unsatisfactory character) kept a public-house, and where the boy William appears to have been brought under much adverse influence. He and his sisters seem to have spent many of their early days in gathering fallen boughs from the surrounding woods.

When about twelve years of age William went to work in a public-house at Winchester, and from there on to Portsmouth, where he found employment (to use his own words) " as a tap-boy, and to clean shoes at the White Hart Tavern. It was a house where officers of the Navy used to dine and sleep, so that it was a profitable place. I remained there about six months, during which time I saw many sad scenes which I delighted in."

From this place he ran away one Sunday afternoon, slipping out by the back door and carrying his little bundle of clothes with him. He at last arrived at the " Half-way houses," plastered with mud ; and so onward as best he could, riding some of the way behind a post chaise upon which he jumped, [to] Horndean and Petersfield, and finally to Bighton Village, where he took service with " the Rev. Mr. H." (who was I conclude the Rector of the Parish)

When speaking of himself at this time he says : " I was a miserable sinner, though I kept it from the eyes of men, knowing my new master would not suffer it. I committed sins too shocking to mention, though the Lord knew them all, and to Him I hope I have many a time made a full confession. I was a drunkard and an extortioner, and followed all manner of revellings."

After his marriage William Faichen went to reside in the village of Bishop's Sutton, where he obtained work at a carriage-factory. This industry was carried on at Sutton for many years, and I can remember the factory (close to the " Ship " Inn) very well when I was a child.

It was here that William Faichen was, as he tells us, brought under the teaching and influence of the Rev. S. Maddock " who pointed out to me, he said, the way of salvation by a once crucified Saviour, for which I shall have to praise Him throughout Eternity."

His whole heart and life and character became entirely changed. It is one of the most remarkable instances of true conversion that I ever heard of. He became humble, teachable and unselfish, living to help others and to lead them too to Christ.

His work at the factory was very arduous, he was employed there from 5 a.m. till 7 p.m. and he received for a while very low wages.

Feeling that the children of the village stood sadly in need of instruction, there being neither a day nor Sunday School in the place, William determined to give up his two hours of evening leisure for this purpose, and after some trouble, a little night school was established in the *belfry* of the Church. A good-natured farmer volunteered to convey bricks to form a floor, the place being cold and damp. He also helped Faichen and a few elder boys to lay the bricks, whilst another neighbour white-washed the walls. The following is an extract from Mrs. Maddock's narrative :

" One evening some of our party walked to Sutton, where we found William engaged in his usual labour of love teaching the children in the belfry. He was seated on a simple stool ; in one corner was a plain and roughly formed wooden candlestick nailed on a rugged pedestal of his own construction ; a pair of iron snuffers were hanging on the stand.

" Let the reader picture to himself this good man at the close of a day of 14 hours of labour, thus spending the remainder of his strength. Let him suppose the daylight closing in upon him and the light of his single candle in the prophet-like stick shedding its dim rays partially through the aisle of the church, and see the clustered group of little heads around him to catch but light enough to read the sacred page. Follow him on till every noise is stilled, every knee is bent in worship and he alone is heard to pray that God would bless his humble labours and by His Spirit teach these children to love and fear His holy name. I was one of those who walked to Sutton Church on the occasion alluded to, and long will the events of that evening have a place in my memory."

For some time it had been Mr. Maddock's great desire to open a day school in this parish for the children of Ropley and Sutton, and on the evening which has just been described he and Faichen were led to discuss the subject together, and eventually after much consideration and prayer all obstacles were removed, and in July, 1825, the erection of the Ropley Village School, with a cottage adjoining, was actually begun. William Faichen had agreed to become its master—and indeed he was well fitted for such a post.

The work progressed rapidly, and on the 6th of May, 1826, the school was opened, and William commenced his

labours amongst the little children. Himself he wrote: "A happy day it was, and one much to be remembered by many."

Not only by teaching in the village school but in many other ways did this wonderful man seek to help and benefit others. In his leisure moments he visited the sick and poor—praying with many a dying cottager, and bringing sweet consolation and assurance to doubting hearts.

"When we recollect," says Mrs. Maddock, "that in his childhood he was *taught* to break the laws of man, as well as those of God, and that he grew up from youth to manhood hardened yet more and more in sin, when we see such a one drawn by the cords of divine love, turning him from sin to holiness, we must own that Grace to be free indeed and that Love to be immeasurably great." He himself says: "I never entered the school the four years I was teacher without first going into my closet to call upon my God and Saviour to assist me and give His blessing upon my labours, and so also I closed every day, and many, very many seasons of blessed refreshment for my soul have I here found, such as language cannot speak or pen describe."

A friend of his when writing to another after his death bears this testimony to his character:—"Since I have known him, which has been for nine years, I can say that he was a faithful man and feared God above many. He lodged under my roof for three years and a half, he sat at my table and drank of my cup, and therefore I know his principles to be what he professed, and in all that time I think I am enabled to say before God and man that I never knew him to step out of the way of duty, nor can I at this time bring to my mind any one five minutes in which he was to be found idle."

After four years of earnest, faithful and unflagging service, William Faichen fell ill of a lingering sickness from which he never recovered. I here give a few extracts from Mr. Maddock's notes:—

"Saturday, November 28th. Called to see William and found him very weak. I urged him to give up his office of teaching in the school, but he said: 'I should be quite unhappy to give it up at present, for teaching the children is my delight and joy.'"

On the 30th of November a little missionary meeting was held in the cottage of the village school, when, we are told, "he was seated in an easy-chair by the fire, his countenance was emaciated by disease but it displayed inward peace. I feared that the service had been too long

for him, but he replied with much feeling: 'I could have sat till twelve o'clock.'"

It was his wish to receive the Sacrament once more with some of his Christian friends, and (to quote his pastor's words) "Ten members of our little church surrounded his bed. It was a very solemn season.

'. . . . . The place was bright
With something of celestial light—
A simple altar by the bed
For high Communion meetly spread,
Chalice and plate and snowy vest—
We ate and drank, then calmly blest;
All mourners, one with dying breath.
We sat and talked of Jesus' death.'

"The dying saint appeared indeed to have received fresh strength to give each a parting blessing. He said: 'Oh, my friends, I think I never knew before what the communion of saints on earth really was.'

"On the night before his death a friend visited him, who on observing his struggles for breath said: 'I fear you suffer much?' 'Oh no,' he replied, 'this is only the passage through the river, the conflict will soon be over and I shall be at home with my dear Saviour.' His friend asked him to tell him if he were perfectly happy. He lifted his eyes to heaven and said: 'Perfectly happy—perfectly happy.' The next morning he fell asleep in Jesus."

William Faichen was buried at Bishop's Sutton on the 8th of January, 1830. He desired that the children whom he had so long instructed might follow his body to its resting place. "Those of both parishes assembled at the school house at 12 o'clock and were arranged in order, the boys at one end of the room and the girls at the other, leaving a space for the body to be carried through the midst."

I will close by giving Mrs. Maddock's own words: "The stillness was preserved seemingly without any restraint or difficulty, though including parents and teachers, there must have been upwards of 200 present. The body was carried through the group of children, not a sound bespeaking levity was heard, but many a tear was falling, and I fully believe many a heart was sorrowing, for many a mother was there whose child had told her: 'Our master bids us not to *lie* and *curse* and *swear*.'

"The children walked two and two (the two miles to Sutton). When the body was taken into the Church, fourteen of the elder children—seven girls with white hoods

and seven boys stood on each side of the coffin, and after the reading of the appointed Lesson they sang a selected hymn :

'He is gone, and never more
Shall I hear that voice again.'

"The body was now borne to the churchyard, and as usual placed by the side of the grave. The sun which had for some time been obscured, broke forth with a splendour of clear shining. The grave was on the south side of the church nearly opposite the porch, so that the sun shone immediately on the spot, and gave a distinctive beauty and lustre to the scene. The numbers which had filled the church surrounded the grave. I shall never forget the solemn silence which prevailed.

"The little crowd was soon dispersed, the tongue was loosed and from many lips might be heard the words : 'Truly this was a man of God—he sleeps in Jesus—we shall meet again in the morning.'

"I have visited that grave again. A plain and simple stone marks the spot and tells the stranger that there a pious Village Schoolmaster rests from his labours."

It is to be regretted that the inscription on the tombstone has been allowed to become much obliterated.

After the name and date there is the following :—

"Oh pause beside this lowly grave
For he who rests beneath the sod
Found the Redeemer strong to save
And sought through Him the way to God."

The old Village School, now used entirely as a dwelling-house, is still standing on the Petersfield Road between the Anchor Inn and the H.H. Kennels. Its front bears the following inscription :—

This Building
was erected for the daily education
of the Children of Bishop's Sutton & Ropley A.D. 1826.
M.S.H.

THE WOMAN OF THE HURDLES.

This beautiful little village Idyll was written by the Rev. S. Maddock about the year 1835. I give it almost word for word.

It was on one of those frosty days in the month of February, when a clear and exhilarating atmosphere gives fresh elasticity to both body and mind, that I determined to take a solitary ramble. An almost cloudless sky and a

brilliant sunshine made one forget that the blast of winter had swept across the land, and stripped it of its beautifying verdure.

I bent my course towards the east, when having passed through some narrow winding lanes whose mossy banks sparkled with dew I arrived at the top of a rugged hill, the summit of which was covered with fine beech woods at the entrance to which are various beaten tracks formed by the footsteps of the peasantry who daily frequent them for their scanty supply of fuel. I chose the path to the right which skirted the wood, and after following its various windings I at length found myself leaving the wood on my left, and a varied scene opened upon me towards the South—fields beautiful by their undulating surfaces, and some partly surrounded by thick and extensive woods.

I felt induced to proceed, but soon discovered that I had strayed from the path, and that no further trace of footsteps remained. I stopped to reflect what I should do, being anxious to pursue my ramble. While I was musing I saw a figure at some little distance in a large open field, whose surface was but faintly tinged with the yet tender blades of wheat; but it was very difficult to say whether it was the figure of a man or a woman. However, I was determined to make my way to the moving form, to ask for further directions. I approached nearer and perceived it was that of a female, apparently middle-aged, dressed in the coarse, homely garb of a peasant, over which she wore a man's gaberdine, and over that an old coat. I accosted her, and she returned my greeting with great civility and readily gave me the information I desired. I love to talk to the shepherd or the labourer of his employments, and if as sometimes happens, I find in the "keeper of the sheep" or the "tiller of the ground" a child of Jesus, a fellow traveller to the Celestial City, my heart rejoices as one who findeth hidden treasure.

One of these my new acquaintance proved to be, and I entered into conversation with her according to my usual plan, and asked her what her employment was.

"Oh, sir," she said, "I am keeping the birds from the corn. I have a large flock. They go to a great distance during the day, but they lodge in yonder wood at night. I am obliged to be here by break of day, to mind that they do not feed upon this corn. At night I light a large fire to frighten them away, and I stay till the sun has sunk below yonder hill, then when my feathered flock are safe at rest, I return to my humble cottage; wearied it is

true in body, and stiffened with the cold, but with a thankful heart."

Interrupting her I asked: "Have you no shelter to flee to in the chilling tempest and the falling rain?"

"Yes, sir, I rest under yonder hurdles, or sometimes in the bottom of that dell. That rude shelter has been one of much comfort to me, many sweet thoughts have passed through my mind whilst I have rested under these hurdles. I have gone over these fields with my own hard labour for near three months, I have been watching the new springing corn to keep it from those hungry birds."

I asked my humble friend whether she knew anything of the grace of God in the heart, which springs up like the tender herb—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.

"I bless God I do, sir; I have had many a sweet repast as I have said, under those hurdles at times: that spot has been none other than the Gate of Heaven."

Surprised by and delighted with what had fallen from the lips of so humble a saint of God, I said: "Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, happy is that people that have the Lord for their God."

I asked her to go with me a few paces till the way was more direct. We proceeded together along the side of a deep glen, when my guide pointing to the path I ought to pursue, added "May God prosper you, sir."

I promised to retrace my footsteps to the hurdles by the time of her lighting her evening fire. Finding a rude stone I rested on it to ruminate on the past interview.

Having rambled about till I found by my lengthened shadow that the sun must be nearly set by the time I had reached the wind-rent hurdles, I turned my steps, and soon recognised my humble friend blowing the feeble embers of her evening fire into a flame.

"Well, my friend," I said, "am I in time to see your birds go to rest?"

"Oh, sir," she said, "you see my fire keeps them off, they will not come near me now, they have passed yon headland and are settling for the night on the branches of that wood."

The poor woman begged me to stay a few minutes with her, observing that my unexpected visit had been to her like one from a heavenly messenger, adding that she believed God had sent me. We talked together some little time, and then sang that beautiful hymn of Cowper's:—

"Far from the world, O Lord, I flee—
From strife and tumult far."

"Sweet words," said she, "they seem just made for this spot, where none but God seeth me, perhaps for whole days together."

The sun was just setting, it had tinged the western sky with varied and glowing hues, the sombre tints of evening were spreading themselves along the north, while in the falling breeze were heard by turns the bleating sheep returning to their folds, the sound of the shepherd's dog, in responsive note to his master's shrill whistle, and the faint echo of the sheep-bell now wafted by the swelling gale and now with soft cadence dying on the listening ear. I lingered on the spot, indeed I was reluctant to leave it, and felt constrained to say, it is good to have been here.

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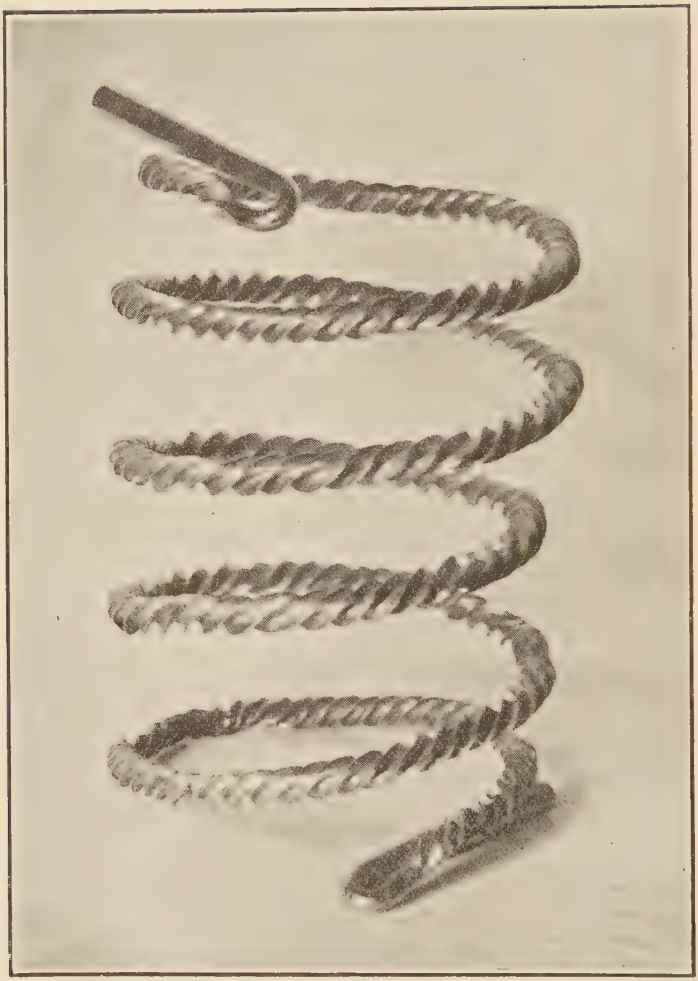
From what I can learn from one or two of the people here, this dear old woman's name was Guy. If so, I knew her daughter "Becky" Guy when she was an old woman and I was a child and a young girl. She used to dine at the Vicarage every Sunday in order that she might attend both the morning and afternoon services, and thus be spared a second long walk to Charlwood where she lived. She followed in her mother's footsteps, being a humble and sincere Christian.

THE GOLD TORQUE.

In 1845 a beautiful gold torque was ploughed up in a field at Lyeway, Ropley, probably on the site of some ancient burial ground. It was of the usual twisted pattern, terminating in recurved hooks of solid metal, and absolutely perfect, bright and uninjured save for one dent caused by the plough.

This beautiful ornament weighed over 5-oz. and was exhibited by Mr. Lilywhite, on whose ground it was found, at a meeting of the Archaeological Institute at Winchester in 1845. For a number of years it was preserved at Lyewood, the residence of Mr. Lilywhite, after which it passed into the collection of Sir John Evans, whose son, Sir Arthur Evans, sold it at Sotheby's in 1925 to the Cornwall County Museum, Truro. It is assigned to the late Bronze Age, about 1,000—800 B.C. and is of a type common in Britain but exceptional abroad. Most of them were worn round the neck, though the Ropley specimen seems to be adapted for the wrist.

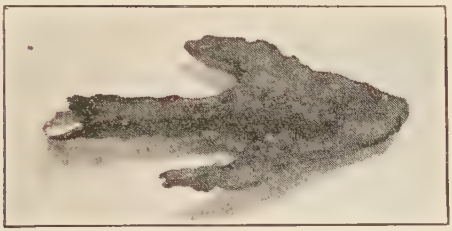


THE TORQUE.

TWO ANCIENT RELICS.

Some few years ago an iron arrow-head of mediaeval times, probably of the 14th century, was dug up on the north side of the churchyard, when a grave was being made.

I understand by a letter from the British Museum asking for its position in regard to the body, that if lying parallel with the skeleton and near the shoulder it would probably have been the dead man's favourite weapon, which was buried with him; if in any other position he may have been killed with it.



ARROW HEAD.

It was impossible, however, to obtain any details as to its position, for it was not noticed until dug up.

About the same time, also in the churchyard, a Nuremberg counter of the 17th century was found. These were used with a chequer board for making up accounts. The best known survival of the usage is preserved in the title of the "*Exchequer.*"

These counters were produced in great numbers and many of them were made in Nuremberg. This coin bears the name of its maker—Hans Schu . . . ?

COINS.

THE BARROW.

A solitary barrow of the bronze age (which came to an end about 500 B.C.) stands here in an open field on the western side of Old Down Wood. I have never been able to discover any authentic record of its having been opened, but like most of the "round" barrows in this neighbourhood it probably contains nothing but burnt bones or possibly some fragile urns. It is a thousand pities that these ancient relics should so many of them be gradually levelled by the plough. The village people's idea used to be that here "some great battle was fought."

THE SEMAPHORE.

In a green lane on the outskirts of this parish not far from the Alton road stands the old Semaphore—or Telegraph as it is usually called.

This means of communication was first established by the French in 1794. The invention was due to a man named Chappe, who called it a Telegraph—the term Semaphore was of later date. By means of signals made by two vast arms in various positions, intelligence was rapidly given from hill to hill. In this case I think Beacon Hill, near Petersfield, would have been the next station. Such great rapidity was obtained that the hour of noon could be signalled from Greenwich to Portsmouth and an acknowledgement received in one and a half minutes.

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The old Telegraph house is now used as an Isolation Hospital in connection with Alton.

THE COMMON FARM.

In the year 1785 many common lands in Hampshire were enclosed. One of the earliest of the modern enclosures was that of the common land near Kitfield, Ropley, made about the beginning of the 18th century. The long parallel fields on the east of this parish denote the situation of these lands, while the old tenements, lanes and gardens on the west of it show where the ancient village existed.

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"Privitive landmarks of some kind are denoted by such names as Four Marks, where the parishes of Chawton, Ropley, Farringdon and Medstead meet.

THE BARROW.

"The limits of the Forest-land in Hampshire at the settlement of the Saxons can be traced by the numerous names *dean* and *den* which they gave to various localities. Bramdean and Ropley Dean are names which relate to the ancient forests of mid Hampshire."

From *The History of Hampshire.*

THE OWNER OF THE LODGE.

I cannot but feel that any Records of Ropley would be incomplete without a reference of some sort being made to Mr. Mulcock who lived at Ropley Lodge, and was a truly remarkable man.

From being but little if at all removed from a mere agricultural labourer, he rose to become a man of substance and position, leaving at his death no less a sum than £130,000.

He used at one time to wear straw in his boots and he daily followed the plough. Of a thrifty and saving nature, and living in a very frugal manner, he soon became possessed of a small farm, and during the Crimean war, in some way which I am unable either to understand or explain, he made money rapidly and became a really rich man.

His life at the Lodge was to a large extent an isolated one. He was the reverse of sociable in his ways, and seemed desirous of standing aloof in a semi-defiant spirit from his neighbours near or distant. Of any of his own kindred I believe he never so much as caught a glimpse at any time.

Many stories, some very amusing ones, used to be told about him in the village and neighbourhood. Most of these I have forgotten—even were it in perfect good taste to repeat them here. He was a Justice of the Peace, and many of these anecdotes had reference to his sayings and doings whilst sitting on the Bench at Alresford.

His education was but scanty, and it was often some misunderstanding on his part as to something either spoken or written that caused him to take great and sometimes lasting offence, when no slight whatever was intended.

He used to ride an old grey pony about his farms at Ropley, and very occasionally might he be seen driving in his large old-world carriage, with its pair of heavy horses; his coachman wearing a gold band around his hat. There seems no tradition of his ever having been seen on foot; though doubtless he must have walked occasionally!

He was always referred to by the village people as "Squire Mulcock," and I think many of them were a little

in awe of him, especially in his magisterial capacity, for he evidently was a bit severe.

Beneath all his peculiarities he had something like a soft spot in his heart, for he would almost always respond to an appeal on behalf of the sick and poor, giving grapes or other little delicacies in cases of illness amongst the village people. He had a lasting quarrel with the Vicar, and refused during his lifetime ever to attend Divine Service in Ropley again. I can remember the large high-back pew, known always as " Mr. Mulcock's," before the church was restored, but I do not think he ever occupied it more than once or twice, as his own decease followed soon after that of the good Vicar himself.

He had some very good stables and a coachhouse built exactly opposite the church, intended for his own carriage and horses when he should attend church, and these have recently come into my own possession.

In his will he left a sum of money to be expended yearly on portions of beef for all the poor in the village. This distribution takes place on the 24th of December. It is the cause of much discussion and painstaking on the part of the Vicar and Churchwardens, and I am afraid, some dissatisfaction often arises in connection with it. It is known as " The Mulcock Charity."

For some years the Mulcock Charity has been distributed in the form of tickets for grocery. Another bequest given by Mrs. Onslow, formerly of Ropley Grove, is distributed yearly to the poor of the parish, together with the Mulcock Charity.

After his death Mr. Mulcock's money was found to be left to various clergymen and others in the neighbourhood. He was buried at Beauworth, in which parish he possessed some property. The comment of the papers at the time of his death was " We ne'er shall look upon his like again."

Of Mr. Mulcock's birthplace, and of when and why he came to live in Ropley I know nothing whatever.

DAME DIGWEED.

Just on the borders of Old Down Wood stands a pretty thatched cottage within its neat garden, which I can remember as the home of this dear old woman. She looked a perfect picture, with her upright figure, her high muslin cap as white as snow, a little plaid shawl neatly pinned across her shoulders, and a faint apple-bloom in her checks. She was by no means wanting in intelligence and would have " paid for a good education."

The cottage itself was so spotless that one might have eaten one's dinner from off its red brick floor. The neat dresser, laden with old china and rows of jugs, the quaint open fire-place with its cheery wood-fire upon the hearth, the grandfather clock in the corner, the bright pot-flowers upon the window ledge, all added to the charm. Not a speck of dust rested anywhere.

Dame Digweed kept a tiny school for the children of that district, and well can I recall the little picture which met one's eyes when peeping in through the open door. The two rows of small rustics seated on rough wooden benches and dressed in such a homely way as any modern boy nowadays would laugh at and disdain. Before them stood their patient teacher, cane in hand. This was mostly used as a "pointer," I think, though occasionally it might descend with a sharp rap upon the knuckles of some refractory urchin.

A very elementary and ancient Primer, its pages discoloured and torn, formed the material from which the reading lesson was given. The writing was confined to a few easy sentences upon a slate, whilst the arithmetic, of which I have no recollection, was probably entirely absent. The day's instruction was usually concluded by a lesson from the New Testament, during which the homely explanation given by this dear old woman, and the influence of her own simple faith and fervent piety would doubtless go far towards impressing her youthful hearers.

Sarah Digweed and I had, I believe, a real affection for one another. She always called me "Little Missie," as did most of the village people at that time. My mother used sometimes to allow me to go and take tea with her, well knowing that her influence would be always good, and I looked forward to these events as great treats. Coming home through the big wood I remember that some times I used to fear a little, and would start off running at the top of my speed till I emerged breathless into the open field where the "barrow" is still standing as of yore.

Sarah Digweed was one of the most beautiful characters whom I have ever known in her class of life. Sweet, humble, and true to the core. Her life was beautiful and it shed its fragrance around. Though "filling but a little space," and unknown beyond this her native village, I remember in connection with her those words of the prophet Malachi, "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

Of her husband I have no clear remembrance, save

that he acted as our "organist!" That is to say that dressed in his white smock frock he "turned" the barrel-organ in church on Sundays. This instrument stood in the gallery, and was capable of producing a few long, short, or common-metre tunes at will. Occasionally it would refuse to play at all, and then the service proceeded without music.

"Let not ambition mock their simple toil
Their homely joys and destiny obscure
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor."

* * * * * * * * * * * *

Men call their wives "My Dame," in speaking kindly and respectfully of them. The word "Master" is still in use as a title of respect for elderly men.

FROM MR. WOODHOUSE'S NOTE-BOOK.

May 31*st*, 1873.

Sarah Digweed was buried, aged 79. She was a very remarkable person, gifted with great powers of speech and clearness of understanding. She was a widow and extremely poor; and kept a little Dame School to eke out the pittance which she received from the parish. Her home was at Swelling Hill, nearly two miles from the church, yet she came to church occasionally. The last time she was there was Sunday, May 11th. She was taken ill the next day and lingered in very great pain for more than a fortnight.

We attempted to sing a hymn over her grave, according to her own request; but it was a sad failure. It was the well-known one:

"There is a Land of pure delight."

I promised her to plant a tree to mark the spot.

"FOLK SONGS."

"Folk songs in days gone by played an important part in the life of the English village.

That life is now waning, and with it are passing away the old traditions and customs. It is happily still possible here and there in out-of-the-way nooks and corners to come upon peasant men and women old enough to remember village life of years ago. The English peasant still exists, though the peasantry as a class is extinct.

Reformers would restore the social life of the village. Do what they will, however, it will not be the old life that they will restore. That is gone past recall. It will be of a new order, and one that will bear but little resemblance to the old social life of the 'Merrie England' of history. Already many of the old singers are dead and gone and of the rest few will be able to 'tune a zong' many years hence.

The evidence is too scanty to warrant any certain conclusions with respect to the age of the Folk-song. We must assume that of those now being hardly won from the English peasantry, some have a long history behind them, while others are of a comparatively recent date. It is an indubitable fact that the English peasantry have been singing songs of their own creation since the Conquest and very probably from a still earlier period."

CECIL J. SHARP.

A FOLK-SONG.

There must be many of these no doubt, which until later years would be remembered by the old people. I can, however, trace but one; it is entitled "The Sheep-shearing," and I have frequently heard it "sung" (if singing it can be called) by a dear old man of 91, named Robert Hall of this place. These songs are of great antiquity, and I believe that they have come down to us through many centuries. They have probably never been committed to writing, but have been passed on orally from father to son. Any sort of *tune* can hardly be said to exist at all* and a *rhyme* is of rare occurrence. I here give "The Sheep-shearing" song dictated to me by Robert Hall, who though naturally remarkably clever and intelligent, with a splendidly developed forehead, was yet totally uneducated through an entire lack of "schooling" in his young days, and who could not even read. He would have paid for a good education.

* The metre is nowhere.

* * * * * * * * * * *

A-SHEEP-SHEARING WE WILL GO.

At six o'clock into breakfast we go
Seven o'clock out in the barn we do go.
We pulls off our clothes
And we stands all in rows
And a-sheep-shearing we will go—
We go, we go, we go,
And a-sheep-shearing we will go.

There's our old shepherds they are always a-bragging,
But when the sheep comes in the barn
They always do want tagging
And a-sheep-shearing we will go—
We go, we go, we go,
And a-sheep-shearing we will go.

There's our old Captain stands ahead of the barn,
He do look so scornful and so sly,
But he can't come nowhere a neigh.
And a-sheep-shearing we will go—
We go, we go, we go,
And a-sheep-shearing we will go.

There's our old wool-winder
He's always a-bragging
How well he can do up the fleeces of wool,
But we can shear a sheep and tie up our fleece
Just as well as he.
So a-sheep-shearing we will go—
We go, we go, we go,
And a-sheap-shearing we will go.

At ten o'clock our old master comes out into the barn—
"I think you are getting on very well
Would you like a drop of my best brown ale?"
"Oh yes, sir, if you please."
So we do out our bit and we have a nice drink
And a-sheep-shearing we will go—
We go, we go, we go,
And a-sheap-shearing we will go.

At one o'clock we does out our bit,
Puts on our clothes, into dinner we goes.
Two o'clock out into the barn we do go,
Pulls off our clothes and stands all in rows
And a-sheep-shearing we will go—
We go, we go, we go,
And a-sheep-shearing we will go.

At four o'clock out in the barn
Comes our old master with a nice can of ale or two,
Out comes our old missus with a nice cake or two.
She shares it out as well as she can.
We stands and enjoys ourselves for about twenty minutes or rather more
And a-sheep-shearing we will go—
We go, we go, we go.
And a-sheep-shearing we will go.

At seven o'clock we finish out our job,
Into supper we goes.
We sits there and enjoys ourselves for an hour or two
And haves a nice song or two.
We drinks our master's health
Likewise his wife and family too,
And we gives them three good cheers
And hopes we shall all meet again next year.
And-a-sheep-shearing we will go—
Will go, will go, will go,
And a-sheep-shearing we will go.

* * * * * * * * * *

Robert Hall sang this song at the "Old People's Party" on August 15th, 1918. He tells me that he first heard it when about ten years old at a sheep-shearing at Bighton.

Robert Hall was a really charming old man, and of a type alas! which is fast dying out. He died in 1920, aged 92, his wife died a short time before. They were deeply attached to each other and lived in perfect harmony and love. It was a standing joke, one which never seemed to pall, and which would always move them to fits of laughter, to enquire how many times they had quarrelled since my last visit!

THE MUMMERS.

These were an institution here in earlier times, but for some years past nothing has been seen or heard of them. They were, known as "The Christmas Boys." They used to go round to the "big houses," where they usually gave their performance in the kitchen. They wore rough helmets, covered (as indeed were their whole persons) with long strips of many coloured paper. Their performance never varied. It was a sort of Play of the rudest and most primitive description. Armed each with a wooden sword they marched up and down the room for about ten minutes, speaking not a word but crossing their swords as they met each other. Then the "Play" began in earnest.

Robert Hall (see page 55) at the age of 90 told me all he could remember—just scraps and bits of what the Play was like. I believe it was traditional, never committed to writing; but handed down from father to son since the middle ages. This is what he remembers:—

(Enter Father Christmas)

"Here comes I, old Father Christmas
Welcome, or welcome not,
And I hope that old Father Christmas
May never be forgot."

(Enter Johnnie Jack)

"Here comes I, little Johnnie Jack
With my wife and family at my back."

(He carried a sack supposed to contain these personages).

(Enter Beau Slasher)

"Here comes I, Beau Slasher,
Beau Slasher is my name,
I've been in many battles
But always won the game."

Johnnie Jack and Beau Slasher engage in mortal conflict. Johnnie Jack is left for dead upon the ground.

Then Father Christmas exclaims:

"Is there 'ere a Doctor to be found?

(Enter a Doctor)

"I can cure he."

"You talks pretty big, what about your pay?"

"About £5 is my pay. I've got a little bottle in my waistcoat pocket, as will cure the itch, the palsy and gout, or the pains as goes in and out.'

"Thee be'est a clever Doctor!"

He administers the contents of the little bottle, whereupon "Little Johnnie Jack" is restored to life again.

* * * * * * * * * * *

In the *National Encyclopaedia* I found the following:—

MUMMINGS.

"These were masked plays of the middle ages. The word is from the old French *Mommeur*, and comes from an old Teutonic word, *Mumine* a mask.

"Mummings were generally very splendid pageants. A magnificent entertainment of this sort was given by the City of London in 1377 to Richard II. just before his ascession. In Fabian's Chronicle we read how in Henry the fourth's reign provision was made for a great Dysguysynge or Mumming to the king on Twelfth Night."

Since the foregoing was written I have, through the medium of "Notes and Queries," obtained some interesting information on the subject of Mumming. It is referred to as the strangest and quaintest of all the old customs, and it still survives in some corners of the Isle of Wight.

The Play was called "The Christmas Boys." It was

written in broad dialect with many touches of humour. and was performed with all the solemn seriousness of the amateur by the village rustics in tavern and hall at Christmastide.

"The framework of this piece seems to date from the Crusades; but various historical events and heroic characters have since been incorporated into the dialogue."

Father Christmas is the first to enter, with these words (much as the old man here gave them to me) :—

"Here comes I, wold Father Crismus,
Welcome or welcome not,
And I hopes wold Father Crismus
Will never be forgot.

And now I'm come I han't got long to stay,
But my sons and I will make a little spoort
Avore we goes away
But if you don't like to hear what I've got to say
Step in, my braave *King George, and clear the way."

Each character before leaving the stage always introduces his successor in this artless manner.

At the close of the play before the laughter has died away, Father Christmas returns to pronounce the epilogue :

"Here comes I, wold, poor and mean,
And hardly worthy to be seen.
Roast beef, plum pudden and Crismus pie
Who likes that better than my sons and I?
A jug of your good Crismus ale
Wull make us dance and zing
And money in our pockets is a very fine thing.
Now all o' you ladies and gennelmen that have
Heerd my sons' voices ring
Jest drop a few ha'pence in my wold hat
And you shall hear us zing
God save the King."

A collection and an impromptu sing-song follow.

* * * * * * * * * *

An illustration of Hampshire dialect about 18 years ago.

I was greeted by the following when visiting one of the old villagers :—

"I seed 'ee acumin' athurt they turmits."

*St. George was here meant, and reference is afterwards made to a "viery dragon."

"MAYING."

In the year 1919 the "May children" came round for the last time with their "songs" and garlands. This pretty village institution, which I can remember from my earliest years, was no doubt a very ancient one; it was interesting from its old-world aspect.

The school-children always made a round of the village on May-day, carrying their "May-poles" and garlands. The former were usually nothing but large bunches of wild-flowers, sometimes mixed with a few from cottage gardens, and roughly tied to the top of long sticks; though occasionally a more ambitious attempt was made at something in the nature of a real garland, which consisted of two hoops carried on a pole between two little girls. Arrived before the house, the "songs" began. These were two in number and of the most primitive description. They ran thus:

"Here's my garland, fresh and gay,
Please to remember the first of May."

Followed by:—

"April's gone out and May's come in
If-you-please-mam-will-you-give-me-something-to-see-my-fine-garland."

This last was sung over and over with great rapidity. It was a sort of chant upon middle C rising suddenly to G upon the syllable "*gar*" and dropping back to C at "*land*."

Each child was usually rewarded with a penny.

MAY DAY, 1929.

This morning four of our village children have come round with their "May-poles" singing the two old songs. But I fancy this will be the last time. I told them that these old customs were fast dying out, but that I hoped they would never forget them, but recount them to their grandchildren. I asked them on every May Day to sing over the old chants and so keep them in their memory.

GLEANING.

It is only recently that this useful and pretty custom has gradually been allowed to lapse here. In former years the elder children always, and often the whole family party would turn out into the harvest fields to glean, or to *lease* as it was always called here. Indeed the word glean was

unknown to most of the children. I have never heard any explanation as to the derivation of this word, but (as a suggestion of my own) may it perhaps come from the old French *lesser*, to let, leave, or relinquish ?* I think some must formerly have been confused by the allusions in the Psalms to those who " seek after " or who " speak leasing."

A considerable quantity of corn was often obtained by leasing, which after being ground at the mill was converted into home-made loaves, thus supplying a sufficiency of bread for the whole winter.

LITTLE GLEANERS.

(FOR CHILDREN).

The sweet spring days have come and gone
The summer time is almost o'er ;
And autumn waits to crown the land
With all her rich and golden store.

The sun is low in western skies,
The dew lies cool upon the grass,
The harebell bends her graceful head
To let the gentle breezes pass.

And by the margin of the wood
Where cornfields catch the sunset's ray
The song of reapers breaks the calm
That falls upon the dying day.

And little children, too, are there,
No heavy sheaves their hands have bound,
Yet, scattered o'er the harvest plain
Some golden ears they still have found.

And when the children home return
With little weary aching feet
The mother will look up and smile
And press each lip with kisses sweet.

Dear child, 'tis not for you to stand,
Out in the wide world's great highway,
Where God's strong servants seek to win
The wanderers to His fold to-day.

*Johnson's Dictionary gives derivation from *Lesen* (Dutch) and adds quotation from Dryden. The word *lease* was used in Sussex and possibly elsewhere in this sense.

In some places the ringing of the Church bell was the signal to begin.

Yet if you are the Saviour's child
A little gleaner you may be,
And He will own each deed of love
And say, "Ye did it unto me."

M.S.H.

CHILDREN'S GAMES.

It may perhaps be of interest to learn what games were played by the village children here down to the year 1918, especially so, as it is to be anticipated that they will eventually become obsolete.

The most popular of these are:

Oranges and Lemons.
Sally, Sally Wallflower.
Here come three knights a-riding.
Here we come gathering knots of may
(Corrupted into "*Nuts in May.*")
Here we go round the mulberry bush.
I sent a letter to my love.
Ring a Ring of Roses.
London Bridge is broken down.

* * * * * * *

I believe that the origin of most of these games dates very far back into the past. "London Bridge is broken down" is believed to carry us back to between the years 1176 and 1209, and is supposed to refer to the time when this bridge was first constructed in stone-work in lieu of wood.

HALLOWE'EN.

A dear old woman here (since dead) used to tell me how in her youth it used to be the custom for a young maiden to steal out alone at Hallowe'en, and with a sprinkling of hemp-seed in her hand, wander close round the Church, softly singing the following lines, whilst casting the seeds—

"Hemp-seed I scatter, hemp-seed I sow;
Let him that is to be my true love
Come after me and mow,"

when it was supposed that her future husband would appear. It is not difficult to perceive how this forecast would contain the elements of its own fulfilment.

This same old woman used to recount all this so prettily, with a ring of pathos in her voice and a little gleam

of light in her grey eyes. She told how she wandered forth towards the Church with beating and expectant heart, and yet a little shyly.

"I used to be very fond of reading love stories," she said. "There were not many in my day, and the older folk did not think them suitable for us young ones. I used sometimes to slip one of these into the bosom of my dress and steal out alone to the end of our garden by the well, and there 'dream' a little and read quietly by myself. Not that I was able to do so very well."

I always regret that I never asked her whether Henry N., the woodman (her future husband), ever appeared to her at Hallowe'en.

Since writing the foregoing I have through the medium of *Notes and Queries* and the *Guardian* obtained some further information on the subject of "Hempseed." An allusion to this custom may be found in Burns' poem, "Hallowe'en." The ceremony did not necessarily take place in a churchyard. Sometimes it was in a stack-yard.

This version gives:—

"Hempseed I saw (sow) thee,
hempseed I saw thee, and him
that is to be my true love come after
me and pou (pull) three.

Look over your left shoulder and you will see the appearance of the person evoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp."

See also the lines in *Gay's Pastorals* about 1715:

"At eve last midsummer no sleep I sought,
But to the field a bag of hempseed brought;
I scattered round the seed on every side
And three times in a trembling accent cried—
'This hempseed with my virgin hand I sow
Who shall my true love be the crop shall mow.'"

Dr. Brewer in his *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* quotes the saying that to have some hempseed in your pocket means to have good luck on your side in the most adverse circumstances. He derives it from the French expression "Avoir de la corde de pendu dans sa poche." It seems to be a common idea that hemp-seed brings good luck. Possibly the seed sown by the girl is supposed when mown by her lover to form a cord that shall bind her to him.

THE VILLAGE CHRONOMETER.

For a great many years before I can remember as well as for a few years afterwards, the correct hour in Ropley was ascertained by the moment at which the mail cart from Alton to Winchester passed by the Chequers Inn. "And not fur out neither way," as the villagers said! It was "near enough" for them!

THE WIZARD.

An old man of 84 who used to work for my father, told me about a man named Thorpe who lived in this neighbourhood and who was a Wizard. He then related to me the following story:—

"When I was a lad a man named Haling Budd used to live at the Lyeway Farm, Ropley. One day he was giving a shearing, or a harvest supper to his men. After the meal was over they all came out to stroll in the garden, and to smoke and chat. The man Budd kept a pack of beagles which were enclosed in a yard surrounded by a very high fence or wall—such (he said) as no dog could possibly jump under ordinary conditions. No sooner did the men appear than all the pack of dogs instantly leaped over the wall and threw themselves upon the visitors with great ferocity. With difficulty were they restrained and driven back into the yard. This, said my old friend, "was entirely the work of Thorpe the Wizard."

* * * * * * *

N.B.—This would be about 80 years ago.

I understand that this man Thorpe was in the habit of sleeping in a large *oven* for the sake of the warmth which it afforded! One morning he was found there *dead*.

* * * * * * * *

Since writing the above I was mentioning Thorpe to an old woman here. She said, oh yes, she had often heard about him, though he lived rather before her time. Some money was once stolen from a cottage at Kitfield and Thorpe was consulted. He at once pointed to a certain house, saying "There lives the man who took your money—*but do nothing, it will be returned to you.*" And sure enough, soon afterwards the thief was seen stealthily to enter the cottage and replace the money from where it had been taken, in fear (as was supposed) of being discovered.

THE GHOST.

An old woman here told me only the other day that the cottage in which she used to live was haunted, chiefly it would appear, by the spirit of a *cat,* which she used to meet about the house, and which was quite impalpable ! Sometimes she would find it sitting by the hearth ; and then it would get up, walk across the room and suddenly disappear without passing through the door. ' I knew it was *my mother,*" she concluded, much to my surprise, " by the way it walked. ' *It was just her walk* ! It walked *exactly like mother* ! "

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The " haunted cottage " was the old one on the right side of Old Chapel Lane.

OLD CUSTOMS.

FROM MR. WOODHOUSE'S NOTE-BOOK.

Many old customs linger here. The Club which meets on Whit-Tuesday at the Anchor Inn, for its anniversary, parades the parish with a band of music, going round to all the principal houses. The men wear clean white mocks and top hats which bear rosettes and streamers.

This Club was ere long disbanded.

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Ruth Pullinger tells me that when she was a girl Public Catechizing was still carried on in Church. On the first three Sundays in Lent, sixteen of the best girls in the school were assembled in the chancel after the second Lesson, and they said the Church Catechism to the Vicar, who gave them a short Lecture on it, after which the Squire (Mr. Duthy) used to give a fourpenny piece to everyone of them.

THE WINNING TEAM.

A dispute arose in Ropley about 100 years ago as to which farmer possessed the best team of waggon horses. The trial decided upon was this—whichever team could bring a stone from Bridestone Lane in the shortest time should be accounted the best. This was put to the test. The waggons started off early in the morning at the same moment. The best and second best brought their stones home in triumph to the music of the horses' bells. One was placed close to Hall Place on the Petersfield Road,

and the other at the corner of Dunstan's Lane*. Both are still remaining. I have been told by some of the old people that these stones have grown in size since they were placed in these spots !

A FAIRY TALE.

There is, not far from here, a lane with overhanging woods on either side of it—a beautiful spot. It is called Bridestone Lane and is on the right hand side of the main road between Farringdon and Chawton as one comes into Ropley. The story concerning it is as follows :—

" Once upon a time " there was a wedding, and the terrible mistake (as it turned out) was made of *not inviting the Fairies* of the neighbourhood to the festivities. On the way home from church the whole wedding party was turned into *stones* !

These large blocks of conglomerate may still be seen by the lane side.

WHO WAS HE ?
FROM MR. WOODHOUSE'S NOTE-BOOK.

A man was found in a dying state under a hedge in a blind lane not far from the Soke. He was put in a cart to be taken to the Union, but died on the way. The body was taken to William Barnard's of The Chequers. An inquest was held at which it was proved that the deceased had been known by sight to many people for some years past, but no one knew his name, his age or his history. He was buried the same afternoon, October 20th, 1872. His coffin bore no inscription of any kind. The coroner's warrant described him as a man to the jurors unknown. And I accordingly entered him in the Register as " A man unknown." He had often been seen in the village. One man said that he remembered him for 14 years but never knew even his name. When the body was examined for the inquest the surgeon's opinion was that death was caused by hunger and exposure. The weather was not cold for the season, but extremely wet and stormy. He had called at the public-house at Four Marks the day before, and had some bread and cheese and beer which were given him. It is said that when the landlady asked him what his parish was he evaded the question.

* Many of the villagers have always called it Dunsell's Lane.

CURIOUS REMEDIES.

An old woman who died but a short time ago has frequently told me that a page from the New Testament eaten daily between a slice of bread and butter was an unfailing remedy for epileptic fits. She had herself, so she said, consumed nearly the whole Book in this way and was greatly benefited.

* * * * * * * * * *

A mouse (the common house mouse) is, so I have been told, an excellent remedy for certain diseases, provided that the patient is not allowed to suspect its nature. It must be carefully disguised, "camouflaged," as we should now say, previous to being set before him. Should he discover the pious fraud, such a remedy will be unavailing.

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It used to be said that some hairs cut off a donkey's back just where the cross appears, and sewn up in a bag, which was to be hung round the sick child's neck, would cure whooping cough.

JOTTINGS.

The word "Street," as here used, and which we have in North Street, South Street, etc., is of much interest and of very ancient origin. It no doubt dates from Anglo Saxon times, when *straet* signified a track or way through a village or hamlet without there being of necessity more than a few scattered tenements on one or both sides of it. The term is chiefly used (as I believe) in Kent, Hampshire and Sussex.

* * * * * * * * **

I am often asked the meaning and origin of the word "Soke." There is a Soke also in Alresford and in Winchester as well as in Ropley. I am not absolutely clear as regards all the details. The word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon Soc—a liberty or freedom, and its origin must date from Saxon times.

The History of Hampshire gives us the following :—

"There were for all practical purposes two Winchesters, existing side by side, and one indeed partly containing the other. There was the municipal Winchester, the city properly so called, and there was the ecclesiastical Winchester, which was quite distinct from it, in civil, as well as ecclesiastical government. This was the Bishop's Soke. In London a similar example occurred, where the

Bishop's Soke included the Ward of Cornhill. In the Soke the Bishop had his own court and his own civil officers."

The Railway line from Alton to Winchester was opened in 1865. Before that time Alton was the nearest station.

When the railway was being constructed, a small stone coffin of Saxon origin was found in a cutting just beyond the Soke. Some of the remaining pieces of the coffin were placed near the Font and the head portion was left in the Vestry.

In former years there was no postal delivery beyond Gilbert Street, the letters remaining in the window of Heath's (now Mr. Harding's) shop till called for—I have known them to stay there for over a week.

The C.E.T.S. was started here by the Rev. Thomas Woodhouse, who was himself the first to take the pledge of total abstinence, in 1877.

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The Mothers' Union was started in 1888, when Mrs. Sumner gave the inaugural address.

THE RED BARN.

This old barn, which only a few years ago was still standing on the Petersfield Road in a small enclosure exactly opposite the turning to Merryfield, was always said to be haunted, but it is only recently, when reading some notes made by the Rev. Thomas Woodhouse, that I have learned the reason for such a tradition.

He says: "Mr. Lillywhite" (himself an old man at that time) "tells me that in his father's time a party of tramps, consisting of a father, mother, and several children, asked leave to sleep in one of the buildings at the Red Barn. They were allowed to do so, but about two o'clock they came up to Lyewood in great consternation saying that they could neither sleep nor return to the barn, having been disturbed by unearthly noises and *the clanking of chains.*

"One of the Tolfrees hanged himself there some years before *with a chain.*"

TWO TRAGEDIES.

To introduce into these village anecdotes any subject so gruesome as the following may, perhaps, appear needless and out of place, nevertheless the fact that two such crimes were perpetrated, on almost the same spot,

separated from each other by an interal of about 90 years, is too remarkable to be passed over.

Both of these occurred on the wooded hill close on the confines of Ropley Parish, which descends from Bramdean into the main Winchester road. The first was that of a letter-carrier who was shot for the sake of about three shillings which he was supposed to have about him. Several persons from Ropley who saw the man washing his hands in the pond at Parkside were conveyed in a farm wagon to the County Assizes at Winchester as witnesses in the case. I have been told that at the time of his execution many Ropley people were present. The outlines of a man depending from a gallows, roughly traced by some rustic hand, could, until recently, be seen upon a large beech-tree near the spot.

The second tragedy was that of a young girl who was found shot on the same spot about 90 years later.

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